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AUTHOR Leithwood, Kenneth; And Others
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ABSTRACT

In 1990, the Ontario Ministry of Education implemented the Transition Years project, an initiative for restructuring middle-grades education. This document presents quantitative findings of a study that identified variations in progress among pilot school sites, with a focus on the commitment-building process. Data were derived from: (1) two surveys completed by teachers and administrators in 350 and 319 pilot sites, respectively; (2) a survey of 3,557 students in 147 out of 152 schools; and (3) a survey of principals at 147 out of 152 schools. Staffs at the pilot sites expressed commitment to the project and high levels of satisfaction. This finding supports the argument that building staff commitment is a crucial task, rather than prematurely focusing on students. Findings identify four significant issues that affect variations in program implementation--project purpose, the substance of changes to be made, leadership, and the role of the family. The following recommendations are made for building program commitment: (1) clarify the major purpose; (2) utilize transformational leadership; and (3) encourage parents and community members to assume school-level decision-making roles. (Contains 78 references.) (LMI)

A RESEARCH STUDY COMMISSIONED BY THE ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Years of Transition: Times for Change

A Review and Analysis of Pilot Projects Investigating Issues in the Transition Years

Volume Two
Explaining Variations in Progress

Principal Investigators
Kenneth Leithwood
Brad Cousins
Diane Gérin-Lajoie

Research Associates
Doris Jantzi
Peter Joong
Laurette Lévy

Ministry of Education and Training
Ontario

This research project was funded under contract by the Ministry of Education and Training, Ontario. It reflects the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the ministry.

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Contents

Part B: Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

Vue d'ensemble

Ce deuxième volume du projet de recherche et d'analyse des projets pilotes comprend une étude de la théorie du changement et les résultats de l'étude quantitative. Plus de 3 000 élèves, 1 500 enseignantes et enseignants, et les directions de 152 écoles de langue anglaise et de langue française ont répondu aux questions de quatre sondages.

L'étude quantitative cherche à répondre aux six questions suivantes :

1. À quel point les méthodes utilisées dans les écoles qui participent au projet sur les années de transition sont-elles conformes aux recommandations du ministère et aux résultats de la recherche correspondante?

2. Quels résultats d'apprentissage ont été atteints ou sont anticipés suite aux initiatives des projets pilotes sur les années de transition?

3. Dans quelle mesure l'ambiance qui prévaut dans les écoles où sont menés des projets pilotes favorise-t-elle l'application de ces initiatives?

4. À quel point les conditions qui existent dans la communauté, dans le conseil scolaire et dans le ministère de l'Éducation favorisent-elles les initiatives contenues dans ces projets pilotes?

5. Quels styles de leadership semblent obtenir les meilleurs résultats dans les projets pilotes sur les années de transition?

6. Qu'est-ce qui explique que les interventions pédagogiques et l'atteinte des résultats d'apprentissage varient d'un projet pilote à l'autre?

Conclusions

1. Il faudrait s'efforcer de clarifier davantage les objectifs principaux des initiatives des années de transition pour les élèves.

2. Lorsque l'on clarifiera les objectifs principaux, il faudra insister sur les effets exceptionnels des initiatives des années de transition au lieu de répéter les buts de l'éducation pour l'école, le conseil scolaire ou la province.

3. Il faudrait élaborer et mettre en application des indicateurs de réussite pour chaque objectif principal.

4. Parmi les changements qu'une école apporte aux initiatives des années de transition, il devrait y avoir un très petit nombre de changements majeurs et d'autres qui viendraient simplement appuyer les premiers.

5. Les personnes qui ne sont pas directement touchées par la mise en œuvre devraient assurer, dans la mesure du possible, un suivi continu des années de transition.

6. Les conseils scolaires et d'autres agences provinciales responsables du développement du leadership devraient considérer l'adoption du modèle de leadership transformationnel comme la méthode la plus apte à favoriser la refonte du système scolaire, proposée dans le cadre des projets sur les années de transition.

7. Le leadership devrait avoir pour but premier de développer un haut degré d'engagement et de participation de la part des enseignantes et des enseignants à la refonte proposée dans les années de transition.

8. En second lieu, le leadership devrait favoriser l'épanouissement professionnel des membres du personnel et l'apprentissage au sein de l'école.

9. Là où les circonstances familiales le justifient et où les parents, tuteurs et tutrices le souhaitent, les écoles devraient s'efforcer, dans une plus grande mesure, d'aider les familles à créer le meilleur environnement possible pour les élèves à la maison.

10. Il faudrait considérer un modèle selon lequel les écoles seraient non seulement le lieu où les élèves reçoivent leur formation et leur éducation, mais aussi où ils et elles apprennent les règles de la conduite sociale. On croyait auparavant que les parents étaient seuls responsables de cet aspect de la croissance des enfants, mais cette notion est devenue inexacte.

11. Il faudrait encourager les parents et d'autres membres de la communauté à assumer davantage de rôles de prise de décision et de gestion au niveau de l'école.

Part A

Background, Framework, and Methods

1.
Introduction to the Quantitative Study of Transition Years Initiatives: Puzzles and Predispositions

One of the most remarkable and sorely lamented patterns of human affairs is also one of the most obscure in origin: the culmination of action in effects directly contrary to those that were intended. Nor can this pattern be attributed to mere want of circumspection, default of planning, or suicidal impulse. For it appears that few institutions, programs or leaders are immune to the vexatious experience of worsening the conditions that they set out so nobly to alleviate. (Sieber, 1981, p. 3)

1.1 Puzzles

Sam Sieber's (1981) study, the source of this opening quotation, sounds a discouragingly pessimistic note in comparison with the often unbridled enthusiasm or naive assumptions displayed by many educational reformers. We do not intend to suggest, by starting this way, that Transition Years initiatives are likely to be fatal remedies, only that their successful implementation and positive impact is by no means assured. After all, the consequences of many previous education reform efforts stimulated one prominent analyst to title his recent book "The Predictable Failure of School Reform" (Sarason, 1990). Are educators in Ontario's Transition Years pilot sites simply providing Sarason with more evidence in support of his claim or do we know enough now about the conditions giving rise to successful school change to be more optimistic about the potential? And if we do, as Michael Fullan (1991) believes for example, are those in Transition Years pilot sites using this knowledge? Have they, indeed, discovered some ways of pursuing improvement in their schools that would stretch our knowledge further? What are the consequences of their efforts, to date?

These were the puzzles giving rise to this quantitative strand of the study and the six specific questions around which data collection was organized. These questions were:

1. To what extent are educational practices in the Transition Years pilot sites consistent with Ministry of Education and Training Transition Years recommendations and the results of relevant research?
2. Which student outcomes are currently being achieved or are anticipated being achieved as a consequence of Transition Years pilot site initiatives?
3. How favorable to pilot site initiatives are conditions which prevail in schools included in such sites?
4. How favorable to Transition Years pilot site initiatives are conditions found in or provided by the local community, the school system and the Ministry of Education and Training?
5. What forms of leadership seem most helpful in the Transition Years pilot sites?
6. What accounts for variation across Transition Years pilot sites in the nature of educational practices and the achievement of student outcomes?

Chapter 6 reports evidence about the first of these questions. The second question is the focus of Chapter 7. Data concerning questions 3, 4 and 5 are reported in Chapter 8. Chapter 9 provides evidence about question 6. In the case of most questions, also examined are the effects of respondents' location in either elementary or secondary schools and of the language of instruction in their schools.

Data used to address these questions were collected through three surveys of school staffs and one survey of students in Transition Years pilot sites.

1.2 Predispositions

The Quantitative Research "Baggage"

At its best, a quantitative study is the antithesis of an intellectual fishing expedition. It is an attempt to capture the best and most plausible of what is known about a problem and to assess the adequacy of that knowledge by comparing it with a new set of empirical data. Such assessment can help determine how much confidence can be placed in existing knowledge. It can also stimulate incremental refinements in existing knowledge and, occasionally, more radical rethinking of the assumptions underlying such knowledge.

While both qualitative and quantitative forms of research are guided by the perspectives which their practitioners bring to their data, such practitioners often value their predispositions quite differently. Although qualitative research can be and has been used to test existing theories or to see how well they fit newly studied settings, qualitative researchers actively may seek to "unshackle" themselves from these predispositions at various points in order to ground themselves in their data more authentically. In contrast, quantitative researchers may go to great lengths to rule out "competing hypotheses" to those consistent with their predispositions. Of course, the most robust research products are likely to result from a combination of these different orientations toward the researchers' predispositions as when both the quantitative and qualitative strands of the present study are combined.

This quantitative study aimed to make as powerful as possible a contribution to knowledge about Transition Years restructuring processes and leadership as the best methods available would permit. Such methods begin with a coherent conceptual framework to guide data collection. The remainder of this chapter describes some important starting points for such a framework. Chapters 2 and 3 describe the framework in more detail.

Theoretical Starting Points

The framework used to guide this study has three theoretical starting points: a commitment-building orientation to restructuring in the Transition Years; a systems (or multi-level perspective) on the school organization; and a social-psychological explanation for the nature of peoples' interactions within and across levels in the school system as they initiate changes in their schools.

Commitment strategies. Ontario's Transition Years initiative exemplifies comprehensive reform and restructuring efforts underway in many parts of the world at present. Like many other such initiatives (the United Kingdom being the most glaring exception), the Transition Years has, at its core, a "constructivist" view of learning (Murphy, 1991), a process in which students actively use their existing cognitive resources to bring meaning to the content of the school curriculum. This view of learning is still novel for many educators and it implies sometimes radical departures from their existing classroom practice. Nevertheless, it is clearly the dominant perspective among educational psychologists at the present time. Many

would consider it to be "the only game in town" - a game that has given rise to an academic movement called cognitive science (see, for example, Posner, 1991). The Transition Years encourages "first order" curricular and instructional changes designed to foster learning understood from this constructivist perspective. "Active learning" is a popular professional slogan used to signify general adherence to this perspective.

Some implications for curriculum and instruction of this view of learning are reasonably clear at the present time. If learning is fostered through social interaction, it makes sense for teachers to add to their instructional repertoires such strategies as cooperative learning. If learning depends on making connections between curricular material and the existing content of learners' long term memories then advocating more attention to curriculum integration seems reasonable. But few people would claim to possess much knowledge about many of the other implications for curriculum and instruction of a constructivist view of learning. For example, research is very much "underway" with respect to the teaching of mathematics and science. And while implications for instruction in language are further developed than in most areas, these implications remain extremely difficult to agree upon (Watson, 1989) and continue to evolve rapidly (Harste, 1989).

The Transition Years, then, as described in its several documents, *specifies* and *implies* first order changes in curriculum and instruction. Additionally, however, it also specifies and implies second order changes. These are administrative, policy and structural changes designed to support first order changes (e.g., changes in school organization and school-community relations). In this respect, as well, Transition Years initiatives are like major reform efforts found in many other jurisdictions (Elmore, 1990; Murphy, 1991). As evidence has accumulated about how such initiatives are best implemented, Rowan's (1990) distinction between "control" and "commitment" strategies for change has emerged as especially helpful. Control strategies are based on the assumption that there are high levels of certainty about what the changes being advocated ought to look like in practice. With such certainty, control strategies include, for example, closely supervising how those changes are carried out, specifying roles and relationships in some detail, and emphasizing the managerial functions of administrators.

In contrast, commitment strategies assume uncertainty about what is to be implemented although there may be agreement about an ambitious set of goals to be accomplished. Such strategies assume that implementors have a vital role to play in shaping the specific "street-level" manifestation of the changes and the aim is to convince people that such shaping is not only worthwhile, but that there can be considerable compatibility between their goals and the goals of policy-makers. Restructuring educational organizations, especially in ways that significantly alter traditional power relationships, is a means to this end (Sarason, 1990). According to the proponents of commitment strategies, as schools move from hierarchical to consensual forms of power (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991), implementors, like teachers, begin to acquire more ownership in the implementation effort. They develop a commitment to make the change work, whatever it takes.

Systems perspective. Sarason (1990) has argued that a major reason for the impotence of past school reforms has been failure to consider schools as systems - indeed, as "nested" systems. This is a failure to appreciate how one (desirable) change made within a component of a school organization gives rise to other (sometimes undesirable) changes elsewhere in the organization. It is also a failure to appreciate how neglecting to change a part of the organization can discourage the maintenance of changes being implemented elsewhere; how, for example, the failure to change the tests by which teacher and student success are measured can detract from the teaching of objectives not acknowledged by those tests. Senge (1990) considers such "systems thinking" a hallmark of the learning organization.

A second theoretical starting point for our research, then, was the adoption of a "systems perspective" on the school organization. Use of such a perspective is another important explanation for the insights available in recent policy implementation research. Indeed, Bossert (1988) argues that such a perspective ".. seems to chart the future for research on school organization effects by overcoming the biases of the bureaucratic model and the loosely coupled formulation" (p. 351). The bureaucratic model stresses hierarchical control of organizational activity; loose coupling views relationships among those at different levels in the organization as interactive and conceptualizes that interaction as complex and often subtle: for example, school boards create "contexts" within which schools' decision-making takes place and schools' decisions, in turn, shape the context for subsequent school

board decisions. The conception of Transition Years implementation that we developed encompassed this perspective.

Interaction. An especially useful way of understanding the interaction that occurs within and across levels in the school organization is provided by social-information processing theory (e.g., Bandura, 1977). This was the third theoretical starting point for our study. Such theory acknowledges the subjectively constructed meaning that each organizational member attributes to their work. It recognizes in addition, however, that such meaning is usually developed in a social environment (Cantor, Mischel & Schwartz, 1982; Isen & Hastorf, 1982), an environment in which social interpretations make "certain information salient and point out connections between behaviors and subsequent attitudes - creating meaning systems and consensually shared interpretations of events for participants" (Pfeffer & Lawler - quoted in Hart, 1990, p. 507). Sykes (1990) has recently used this perspective in attempting to better understand the relationship between classroom practices and curriculum frameworks advocated for schools in California. Cousins and Leithwood (in press) showed that "interactive processes" play an important role in enhancing the use of knowledge for school improvement. An adequate conception of Transition Years implementation, in our view, had to account for the personal construction of meaning by implementors and the effect of such meaning making on the outcomes of Transition Years implementation.

1.3 Conclusion: In Defense Of Theory

If all this sounds too theoretical, too far removed from the real-world problems confronting schools as they try to change the way they do business, consider this. Curriculum integration is a theory for how to help kids make more meaningful intellectual connections; so is subject-matter specialization. Cooperative learning is a theory for how to help kids use the resources of others to learn better themselves; so is individualized instruction. Destreaming is a theory for how to reduce inequity in our schools; so is streaming. Core curriculum is a theory for how to ensure equal access to knowledge on the part of students; so was the more elective curriculum represented by Ontario's former Credit System.

Our point is that all of the knowledge we use to guide our actions as educators is theoretical. The distinction between theory and practice never has made any sense!

We only have more or less well-justified, formal, detailed, helpful, powerful, etc. - theories. Unfortunately, the study of educational change has paid scarce attention to the implicit theories on which it has been based and almost no attention to the development of powerful explicit theories for explaining and guiding action. The result - a huge compendium of more or less warranted rules of thumb or guidelines without a core of generic ideas to give them coherence.

We make no apologies, then, for approaching the study of Transition Years initiatives as we do. Our study needs to provide results which are "clear," "understandable," and "useful". "Clear" will be a function of our rhetorical skills; "understandable" and "useful" will depend on our theoretical sophistication. Chapters 2 and 3 provide more detail about this matter.

2.
Conditions Giving Rise to Commitment

It is the quality of the teachers themselves and the nature of their commitment to change that determines the quality of teaching and the quality of school improvement. (MacDonald, 1991, p. 3)

2.1 Commitment, Engagement and Motivation

Transition Years initiatives have not been specified in detail by policy; as we have argued, existing knowledge does not permit this, quite aside from whether it would be desirable. Rather, educators have been asked to take a broad set of goals (e.g., Equity, Excellence, Accountability, Partnership; ten essential learning outcomes) and loose directions for practice (e.g., "teaching methodologies should emphasize relationships among ideas") as a point of departure and to develop, themselves, the specific meaning of these goals and (especially) practices in their schools. This is approaching school restructuring as a mammoth do-it-yourself project and its success depends, as we have also argued, on high levels of commitment and engagement by teachers. In this section the meaning of teacher commitment and engagement is explored and what is known about their causes and consequences is reviewed. The model of school improvement which provided the framework for this strand of the study and which is described in the next section (a "commitment strategy" in Rowan's, 1990, terms) grows out of these understandings.

Commitment and engagement are often viewed as different psychological states and several forms of each have been identified. Teachers, it is claimed, may demonstrate commitment to their schools (organizational commitment) as well as commitment to student learning - forms of commitment which may have different causes and consequences (Kushman, 1992; Rosenholtz, 1989). Organizational commitment is typically defined as (a) a strong belief in the organization's goals and values, (b) willingness to exert effort for the organization, and (c) a strong desire to remain a part of the organization (e.g., Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979; Reyes, 1990). Commitment to student learning, on the other hand, is typically thought to include (a) feelings of self-efficacy on the part of a teacher, (b) expectations that students will learn, and (c) a willingness to devote needed effort to ensure such learning

(Kushman, 1992). A concept closely related to commitment, teacher engagement, some claim, is of four distinctive types: engagement with the school as a social unit, with the academic goals of the school, with students and with the discipline or teaching assignment (e.g., Louis & Smith, 1991). These forms of engagement appear to fall within the two broader categories of commitment already identified.

Rather than attempt to maintain a distinction between commitment and engagement, however, and to determine their causes and consequences separately, we consider them to be elements of the more fundamental, underlying psychological state called motivation. Comprehensive theories of motivation, in particular, those of Ford (1992) and Bandura (1986), predict most of the causes and consequences of teacher commitment and engagement identified in recent empirical research - and more. Motivational processes, according to Ford (1992), are qualities of a person oriented toward the future and aimed at helping the person evaluate the need for change or action. These processes are a function of one's personal goals, beliefs about one's capabilities, beliefs about one's context and "emotional arousal" processes. Let's consider each of these, in turn.

2.2 Personal Goals

Personal goals represent desired future states (aspirations, needs, wants) that have been internalized by an individual (e.g., a teacher's desire for a manageable class). The term "personal" is significant. School staffs set goals for their improvement efforts; curriculum guidelines contain lists of goals; new policies aim to accomplish often quite ambitious goals. But such goals do not influence the actions of individual teachers and administrators until they make them their own. Goal-setting activities in schools often fail to accomplish this internalization. In such cases, the resulting goals have little meaning to people and often cannot be remembered even though they might appear prominently in written material about the school.

While personal goals are an important launching pad for motivation, they must be perceived to possess certain qualities in order actually to energize action. First, goals energize action only when a person's evaluation of present circumstances indicates that it is different from the desired state. For example, a teacher who judges his class already to be well managed perceives no need to act or to change

with respect to this goal. Clearly, the easiest way to avoid change is to set goals that are being accomplished already - an action not unheard of in the school improvement business; Berman and McLaughlin (1977) referred to this as "coopting" the change. Second, personal goals are more likely to energize action if they are perceived to be hard but achievable. "A more manageable class" would qualify on this count if the teacher's current class was regularly out of control for reasons the teacher believed he at least partly understood. Louis and Miles (1990) have reported increased likelihood of innovation in schools where the innovation is perceived to be challenging but "do-able".

To energize action, third, it also helps if goals are clear and concrete: "developing a more manageable class" is probably not as motivating as "reducing the time wasted in making transitions from one activity to another". This is the case because what teachers need to do is much more evident to them. The goal almost specifies the action to be taken. Finally, goals are more likely to be energizing when they are proximate or short term but understood within the context of longer term and, perhaps more important, more obviously valuable goals ("This week I will try to keep the transition from reading to math under three minutes as a start toward a more manageable class"). As Ford points out, highly motivating goals often result from:

> .. goal setting techniques that emphasize .. constant improvement toward explicitly defined goals that are more challenging than current levels of achievement or productivity, but also well within reach if effort and commitment are maintained. (1992, p. iii)

These energizing qualities of personal goals are independent of the specific content of those goals. And the number and nature of personal goals, in terms of content, is enormous. Such acknowledgement casts a different light on, for example, the two types of teacher commitment studied by Kushman (1992) and the four forms of teacher engagement described by Louis and Smith (1991). These types and forms of commitment and engagement can be viewed as different content goals. Construed in this way, it seems likely that teachers have many more types and forms of professional commitment and engagement of consequence than the empirical literature has so far uncovered. Compared, for example, with Ford's (1992) taxonomy of human goals, these types and forms of commitment and engagement are encompassed (suitably contextualized for teachers) within just two

of twenty-four categories. Those categories are entitled "belongingness" (building or maintaining attachments, friendships, intimacy, or a sense of community; avoiding feelings of social isolation or separateness) and "social responsibility" (keeping interpersonal commitment, meeting social role obligations, and conforming to social and moral rules ..). This large number of potential content goals that a teacher may hold implies that teachers may be committed to or engaged by many more aspects of their work environment than have been considered by relevant research to this point. A commitment strategy for school restructuring ought to be as comprehensive as possible in identifying those aspects of the work environment.

In summary, motivational theory redefines the objects of teacher commitment and engagement (e.g., to the school, to student learning, to one's discipline) as personal goals. It also identifies conditions that must prevail if such goals (or different forms of commitment and engagement) are to energize action toward implementing Transition Years initiatives. These conditions include:

- Adoption, as personal goals, of at least a significant proportion of the goals represented by the Transition Years. Commitment to Transition Years initiatives will depend, in part on the teacher's or administrator's perception of compatibility between personal goals and Transition Years goals. Louis and Smith (1991) identify such congruence as an indicator of the quality of work life influencing levels of teacher engagement with their work.
- An appreciation by teachers of a significant gap between their current practices and those implied by the Transition Years initiatives.
- A perception, on the part of teachers, that implementing Transition Years initiatives is a significant but achievable challenge. Shedd and Bacharach (1991) argue that teaching provides intrinsic motivation under those restructuring initiatives which conceptualize teaching as a highly complex act and help teachers significantly expand their technical repertoires and their capacities to apply them reflectively and constructively. Contributing to the perception of a goal's achievability are opportunities to learn more about how the goal can be accomplished (Kushman, 1992; Reyes, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989).
- A perception by teachers that they know, specifically and concretely, what they will need to do (or that such specificity can be developed) eventually, to implement Transition Years initiatives in their school and classes. Both Shedd

and Bacharach (1991) and Rosenholtz (1989) identify the importance of positive, constructive feedback to teachers as one means of meeting this condition.

- A belief by teachers that they know the next manageable steps that need to be taken in their schools and classes eventually to accomplish the overall goals their schools have set for Transition Years implementation.

Related research has suggested that for organizational goals to become internalized by individuals, the following conditions also should be met:

- Goal setting processes should be highly participatory. Heald-Taylor (1991) found that when school goal-setting processes met this condition, teachers developed greater understanding of and commitment to school goals.
- Goal setting processes should be ongoing, with continuous efforts to refine and clarify the goals yet to be accomplished. Leithwood, Dart, Jantzi and Steinbach (1992) found that such ongoing efforts kept school goals alive in teachers' minds and contributed to gradually increasing the meaningfulness of these goals for teachers.

2.3 Capability Beliefs

Two sets of "personal agency" beliefs interact with teachers' personal goals to help determine the strength of motivation to achieve such goals. The first set, *capability beliefs*, includes such psychological states as self-efficacy, self-confidence, academic self-concept and aspects of self-esteem. It is not enough that people have energizing goals in mind. They must also believe themselves capable of accomplishing these goals. Evidence reviewed by Bandura suggests that:

> People who see themselves as [capable or] efficacious set themselves challenges that enlist their interest and involvement in activities; they intensify their efforts when their performances fall short of their goals, make causal ascriptions for failures that support a success orientation, approach potentially threatening tasks nonanxiously, and experience little in the way of stress reactions in taxing situations. Such self-assured endeavor produces accomplishments. (1986, p. 395)

Perceived capability or self-efficacy increases the intrinsic value of effort and contributes to the possibilities for a sense of collective capability or efficacy on the part of a group, as well.

Teachers' beliefs about their own professional capabilities are often eroded by taken-for-granted conditions of their work. These conditions include infrequent opportunities for teachers to receive feedback from credible colleagues about the quality of their practices as a consequence of isolated school cultures and ineffective supervisory practices (Rosenholtz, 1989). Smylie's (1990) review of research on the consequences of teachers' beliefs about their own professional efficacy described significant relationships between such capability beliefs and the effectiveness of classroom practices, student learning, and the likelihood of engaging in classroom and school improvement initiatives.

Increased perceptions of capability or self-efficacy may result from people considering information from three sources. The most influential source is their actual performance: specifically, perceptions of success perhaps formed through feedback from others. Success raises one's appraisal of one's efficacy, although such appraisals are shaped by task difficulty, effort expended, amount of help received and other circumstances. Teachers who actually try out new Transition Years initiatives in their classrooms, with sufficient on-site assistance to ensure success, will possess this kind of information.

Vicarious experience is a second source and is often provided by role models. However, to have a positive effect on self-efficacy, models who are similar to or only slightly higher in ability provide the most informative, comparative information for judging one's own abilities. Further, observers benefit most from seeing models ".. overcome their difficulties by determined effort rather than from observing facile performances by adept models" (Bandura, 1986, p. 404). It is also likely to be more helpful, for example, for two teachers to work as a team on implementing cooperative learning strategies, than only to have an "expert" demonstrate such strategies (such demonstrations might be especially helpful for the team part way through their struggles, however).

Finally, verbal persuasion - the expressed opinions of others about one's abilities - may enhance perceived self-efficacy. But for this effect to occur, persuaders must be

viewed as relatively expert in the role or relevant activity or at least credible judges of such expertise. A principal, vice-principal, or department head can perform this role effectively when teachers believe them to be knowledgeable about Transition Years practices. Such persuasion will often take the form of evaluative feedback.

Conditions likely to give rise to positive *capability beliefs* on the part of teachers concerning Transition Years initiatives include:

- Feelings of success in their initial efforts to implement Transition Years initiatives. These feelings may be enhanced by supportive feedback from administrators, peers and students (Smylie, 1990).
- Appropriate models for teachers of Transition Years practices.
- Strong encouragement from credible colleagues about their ability to master Transition Years initiatives. This is a part of one of the quality of work life indicators that Louis and Smith (1991) found to be associated with teacher engagement - frequent and stimulating interaction among one's teaching peers in the school.

2.4 Context Beliefs

A second set of personal agency beliefs are *context beliefs* - beliefs about whether, for example, the school administration or the central office will actually provide the money and professional development that I will need, as a teacher, to "destream" my grade 9 classes. Many experienced teachers have developed negative context beliefs over their careers as a consequence of being associated with mismanaged or ill-conceived innovations (Fullan, 1991; Huberman, 1988). Such negative context beliefs easily may graft themselves onto these teachers' perceptions of Transition Years initiatives, reducing their motivation to implement initiatives ("this too shall pass").

Conditions giving rise to positive *context beliefs* include:

- Teachers' perceptions of an overall school culture and direction that is compatible with their Transition Years goals and not overly controlling of what they do and when they do it (feelings of discretion). The contribution of autonomy and discretion to teachers' commitment is evident in studies by

Louis and Smith (1991) and by Shedd and Bacharach (1991). Participatory forms of decision making are particularly powerful ways of exercising this discretion (Chase, 1992; Imber & Neidt, 1990; Louis & Smith, 1991; Shedd & Bacharach, 1991).

- Teachers' perceptions that their working conditions permit them to accomplish their Transition Years goals and that information is available to them about the expectations of relevant others (e.g., principals, superintendents), constraints on what is possible, policies or regulations that must be considered and the like. Rosenholtz's (1989) evidence points to "teacher certainty" as an important contributor to commitment.
- Teachers' perceptions that the human and material resources that they will need to achieve their Transition Years goals are available (Leithwood, Dart, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1992; Louis & Smith, 1991).
- Teachers' perceptions that the interpersonal climate of the school, provided by leaders and teaching colleagues, is a supportive, caring and trusting one. Chase (1992), for example, found that teacher engagement was positively associated with staff collegiality and solidarity as well as perceptions of administrators, as caring and concerned for their welfare.

In sum, the effects of capability and context beliefs remind us that it is not enough for school staffs to have goals compatible with Transition Years initiatives. Teachers must also believe that they are personally able to achieve those goals and that their school environments will provide the support that they require.

2.5 Emotional Arousal Process

Emotions are relatively strong feelings that are often accompanied by some physical reaction (like a faster pulse rate) - satisfaction, happiness, love and fear, for example. These feelings have motivational value when they are associated with a personal goal that is currently influencing a person's actions. Positive emotions arise when an event promises to help meet a personal goal; negative emotions when chances of achieving one's goal are harmed or threatened. Whereas capability and context beliefs are especially useful in making big decisions (e.g., "Should I actually try to use these new "benchmarks" in reporting my students' progress to their parents?"), emotions are better suited for the short term. Their main function is to create a state of "act on readiness", to stimulate immediate or vigorous action

by reducing the salience of other competing issues or concerns ("I'm so excited by the reaction of the students to journal keeping, which I just saw in the classroom next door, that I'm going to try it tomorrow").

Emotions also may serve to maintain patterns of action. This may be their most important function in consideration of Transition Years initiatives. As teachers engage, from day to day, in efforts to implement Transition Years initiatives, those efforts will be sustained by a positive emotional climate. Conditions supporting such a climate are likely to include:

- Frequent positive feedback from parents and students about their experiences with the newly implemented Transition Years initiatives.
- Frequent positive feedback from one's teaching colleagues and other school leaders about one's success in achieving short-term goals associated with Transition Years initiatives. This might take the form of "celebrations" of success and contributions to the school's efforts. It might also be a function of frequent collaboration with other staff members on matters of curriculum and instruction (Cousins, Ross & Maynes, in press; Kushman, 1992).
- A dynamic and changing job (Kushman, 1992).

2.6 Summary

Transition Years initiatives have ambitious purposes but the specific educational practices to accomplish those purposes require sustained problem solving on the part of school staffs. Successful efforts to implement Transition Years initiatives need to foster considerable commitment to and engagement in such problem solving. In this section, commitment and engagement have been conceptualized as aspects of motivation. Based on this view, we argued that successful Transition Years initiatives will depend on conditions associated with implementors' personal goals, capacity beliefs, context beliefs and emotional arousal processes. A total of 17 specific conditions were identified as useful to incorporate into a commitment-building strategy for Transition Years implementation.

3.

A Commitment-Building Strategy For School Restructuring

The commitment strategy .. rejects bureaucratic controls as a mode of school improvement and instead seeks to develop innovative working arrangements that support teachers' decision making and increase teachers' engagement in the tasks of teaching. The assumption of this approach is that collaborative and participative management practices will unleash the energy and expertise of committed teachers and thereby lead to improved student learning. (Rowan, 1990, p. 354)

3.1 Overview

Outlined in this chapter is one version of a commitment-building strategy for school restructuring. This strategy identifies those areas of the school and larger school systems most likely to provide the conditions for teacher motivation developed in the previous chapter and describes the more specific form that these conditions are likely to assume. Prior evidence in support of this strategy can be found in the empirical results of recent research carried out primarily in British Columbia (Leithwood & Dart, 1990; Leithwood, Dart, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1991, 1992). This research has inquired about the conditions associated with implementation of that province's Year 2000 policy, a policy also aimed at school restructuring. Evidence from three years of such research suggests as important in implementing the Year 2000 policy many of the same conditions identified in the previous chapter.

Figure 3.1 shows the categories of conditions and relationships in the commitment-building strategy, as it has been framed for purposes of studying Transition Years initiatives. Three categories reflect most of the conditions giving rise to teachers' motivation to implement the Transition Years, including interventions designed to contribute to such motivation: out-of-school conditions, in-school conditions and school leadership. As a consequence of the specific conditions and interventions included in these three categories, Figure 3.1 suggests that school staffs implement Transition Years practices. These changed practices, in turn, are intended to have an impact on various kinds of student outcomes.

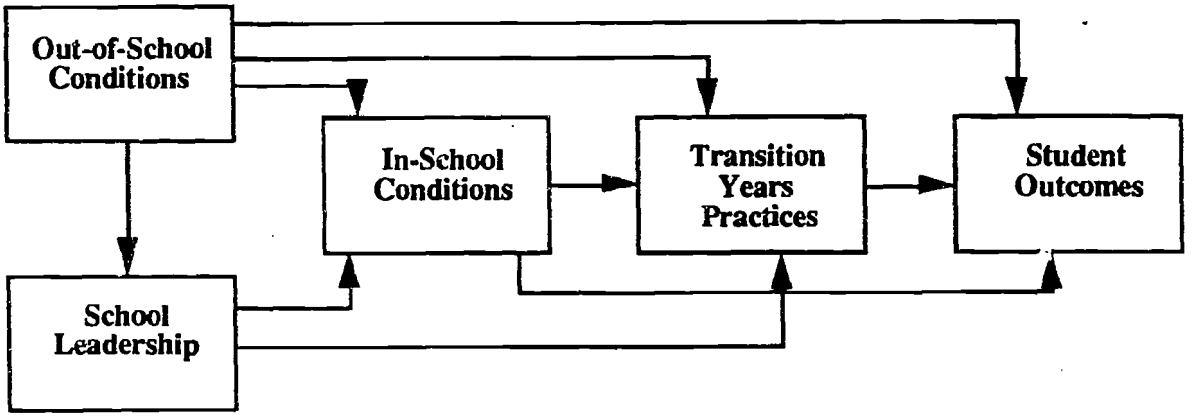

Figure 3.1:

Categories and relationships in a model of school restructuring based on commitment strategies

Studies using earlier versions of this framework justify the relationships signified by the arrows joining the categories in Figure 3.1. Using causal modelling techniques of several sorts to analyze the data, these studies suggest that out-of-school conditions will significantly influence all other aspects of the framework. In-school conditions will influence implementation of Transition Years practices and student outcomes. School leadership will directly influence both in-school conditions and the implementation of Transition Years practices.

Each of the categories in Figure 3.1 includes a number of specific conditions theoretically and/or empirically accounting for the patterns of relationships that are described. The remainder of this chapter describes these specific conditions. Chapter 4 will describe the consequences of this commitment-building strategy - described in Figure 3.1 as implementation of Transition Years practices and Student Outcomes. The remainder of this chapter and Chapter 4 describe the focus of data collection in the study.

3.2· Out-of-School Conditions

Three categories of out-of school conditions are included in the framework; one category associated with the Ministry of Education and Training, one with the school system as a whole and one associated with the school community (parents and others outside the school). For purposes of the study, these out-of-school conditions were defined as follows:

- *Ministry:* the extent to which school staffs value the initiatives of Ministry personnel to explain the Transition Years and its implications for their work; and the perceived adequacy of the curriculum resources, money, personnel and other resources provided by the Ministry.

These conditions provided by the Ministry may help teachers judge the compatibility that exists between their personal goals and the goals of the Transition Years. Such conditions may also contribute to the perception of a gap between current practices and goals viewed as more desirable. Teachers' context beliefs may be influenced substantially by perceptions of the adequacy of resources being provided by the Ministry.

- *School System:* the degree to which staffs perceive as helpful the leadership provided by school board personnel and professional associations, school board staff development opportunities, resources and school board policy initiatives in support of the Transition Years.

School system conditions most directly influence teachers' context beliefs. These conditions may also assist teachers in developing a clearer understanding of the specific goals to be accomplished in implementing the Transition Years. Such conditions may create a strong professional community at the level of the school board (McLaughlin, 1992). This sense of community has been found to positively influence teachers' commitment to the profession and to shape their morale and practices.

- *School Community:* the extent of support or opposition from parents and the wider community for the Transition Years, as perceived by staffs.

Feedback from parents and other community members influences teachers' context beliefs and contributes to emotional arousal processes. These arousal processes are important in stimulating the immediate action of teachers. Substantial expressions of support from the community also will be helpful in sustaining the day-to-day work of teachers in their Transition Years initiatives by contributing to a positive emotional climate in the school.

3.3 In-School Conditions

Six aspects of the school appear to provide motivational conditions likely to support Transition Years initiatives. These include:

- *Goals:* the extent to which staff perceive that the goals of the Transition Years are clear and compatible with their own goals and the goals of the school.

Such perceptions are the starting points for a commitment building strategy. The aim of school goal-setting processes is to arrive at a set of goals which adequately reflects purposes for the Transition Years and professional purposes which individual school staff members find personally compelling. Perceptions of goal compatibility are among the best predictors of policy implementation effort by principals (Trider & Leithwood, 1988).

- *Teachers:* the extent to which teachers believe that they participate in Transition Years implementation decisions, believe the Transition Years initiatives are compatible with their own views and feel committed and motivated to implement the Transition Years.

The participation theme included in this definition is an important element of teachers' capacity and context beliefs. It contributes to feelings of discretion to act in ways that teachers judge to be most suitable for implementing Transition Years initiatives; a substantial literature provides evidence of the contribution this belief makes to teachers' willingness to consider new practices (e.g., Imber & Neidt, 1990; Smylie, 1990).

- *Culture:* the degree to which staff within the school perceive themselves to be collaborating in their efforts to implement the Transition Years.

A collaborative culture influences teachers' context beliefs, in particular those concerning the interpersonal climate of the school - the degree to which it is supportive, caring and trusting. To the extent that collaboration is perceived as providing professional growth opportunities, teachers' capacity beliefs may also be strengthened (Peterson & Martin, 1990; Smylie, 1990). Such contributions to teachers' capacity and context beliefs help explain the positive relationships that have been reported between collaborative school cultures and school effects (Cousins et al, in press; Little, 1982; Rosenholtz, 1985; Saphier & King, 1985).

- *Programs and Instruction:* the extent to which the policy is perceived to be compatible with teachers' views of appropriate programs and instruction and the priority given by teachers to Transition Years implementation.

Teachers' perceptions about this component of the school and its relation to the Transition Years may be part of the process of refining teachers' personal goals: becoming clearer about the nature of the gap that might exist between what is being accomplished and what ought to be accomplished, and judging the personal achievability of Transition Years initiatives.

- *Policy and Organization:* the extent to which staff perceive school policies and organization to support Transition Years implementation.

This component of the school potentially has a major influence on teachers' beliefs about whether the context for Transition Years implementation in their schools will actually support their efforts.

- *Resources:* the extent to which staff perceive as adequate for Transition Years implementation the financial and material resources available to them.

Judgements concerning school resources, like those for policy and organization, are likely to be a major influence on teachers' context beliefs.

3.4 School Leadership

As a whole, out-of-school and in-school conditions included in this commitment-building strategy for school restructuring have their greatest impact on teachers' context beliefs. There are potential contributions to personal goals (goal compatibility) to capacity beliefs (e.g., as part of school culture) and to emotional arousal processes (e.g., community support) but these seem likely to be modest. The conception of school leadership incorporated into the model, *Transformational Leadership*, addresses most directly teachers' personal goals, capacity beliefs and emotional arousal processes.

Meanings associated with leadership cover an awesome range of phenomena. Yukl's (1989) synopsis of what most of these definitions have in common is sufficient for our purposes:

> .. leadership is defined broadly to include influence processes involving determination of the group's or organization's objectives, motivating task behavior in pursuit of these objectives and influencing group maintenance and culture. (p. 5)

Transformational leadership conforms with this definition but has a particular focus captured well by Roberts (1985):

> This type of leadership offers a vision of what could be and gives a sense of purpose and meaning to those who would share that vision. It builds commitment, enthusiasm, and excitement. It creates a hope in the future and a belief that the world is knowable, understandable, and manageable. The collective action that transforming leadership generates, empowers those who participate in the process. There is hope, there is optimism, there is energy. In essence, transforming leadership is a leadership that facilitates the redefinition of a people's mission and vision, a renewal of their commitment, and the restructuring of their systems for goal accomplishment. (p. 1024)

Hunt (1991) traces the origins of transformational leadership, in particular the idea of charisma, to the early work of the well-known sociologist Max Weber. But transformational forms of leadership are part of a leadership theory proposed in a mature form first by Burns (1978) and then by Bass and his associates (e.g., Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1989; Bass, Waldman, Avolio & Webb, 1987) as well as others in

non-educational contexts (e.g., Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990; Podsakoff, Todor, Grover & Huber, 1984). While systematic attempts to explore the meaning and utility of such theory in educational organizations have only recently begun (e.g., Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Leithwood, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1990) results led us to expect that transformational leadership practices would help explain significant variation in progress with the Transition Years. That is, transformational leadership practices were likely to enhance teachers' motivation to implement Transition Years initiatives.

Linked closely to the idea of transformational leadership is the idea of transactional leadership. Transactional forms of leadership are premised on exchange theory; that is, various kinds of rewards from the organization are exchanged for the services of the teacher who is seen to be acting at least partly out of self-interest. Transactional leadership practices, according to the theory, help teachers recognize what needs to be done in order to reach a desired outcome. And this increases teachers' confidence and motivation as well.

The corpus of theory and research travelling under the transformational leadership banner is by no means unified. It offers alternative prescriptions for leader behavior, alternative predictions about the effects of such practices on "followers" and alternative explanations of how these leader behaviors and effects are mediated (see Shamir, 1991). The conception of transformational leadership most suitable for the study of Transition Years implementation has its theoretical genesis in Ford (1992) and Bandura's (1977, 1986) social cognitive theories of motivation and Shamir's (1991) self-concept based explanation of charisma. According to this view, transformational leaders increase their staffs' commitment by "recruiting" their self-concept, by increasing the salience of certain identities and values, and by linking behaviors and goals to those identities and values and to an organizational vision or mission that reflects them.

These transformational leadership effects can be explained as a product of enhanced staff motivation as described in Chapter 2. Conditions associated with personal goals provide a point of departure for Shamir's (1991) efforts to describe how the intrinsic value of internalized goals and their accomplishments can be further increased by leaders. This occurs when people are stimulated to consider the more fundamental values which their goals represent. Actions to accomplish goals

understood in this way take on greater perceived importance; they may become a kind of ideological mission on which a group's identity is based. Stager and Fullan (1992) provide a good example of this in their recent study of a "destreaming" secondary school in Ontario. As one teacher interviewed in the study said:

> We were so committed to destreaming, because for us it was an equity issue ... that's the driving force for us. (p. 208)

In this case destreaming was the goal but equity was the "ideological mission" which gave that goal special meaning. Goals also take on greater meaning when they are shown to be consistent with the school's collective past and future. This creates a sense of connectedness central to feelings of self-consistency.

In summary, when personal goals become shared with others and are believed to reflect deeply held values, an unconditional, moral commitment to their accomplishment by the group and its individual members is engendered. Three dimensions of behavior normally associated with transformational leadership (Podsakoff et al, 1990) are justified by these considerations of the roots of motivation:

- *Identify and Articulate a Vision:* Behavior on the part of the leader aimed at identifying new opportunities for his or her school; and developing (often collaboratively), articulating and inspiring others with a vision of the future (when visions are value laden, they will lead to unconditional commitment; they also provide compelling purposes for continual professional growth).

- *Foster the Acceptance of Group Goals:* Behavior on the part of the leader aimed at promoting cooperation among staff and assisting them to work together toward common goals (especially group goals that are ideological in nature foster group identity).

- *Convey High Performance Expectations:* Behavior that demonstrates the leader's expectations for excellence, quality, and/or high performance on the part of staff (perhaps highlighting discrepancies between current and desired states).

The motivational effects of teachers' capacity beliefs help explain two additional dimensions of transformational leadership included in our study. As we noted earlier, enhanced capacity beliefs may result from experiences of successful performance, appropriate models and verbal persuasion. To enhance capacity beliefs, transformational leaders:

- *Provide Appropriate Models:* Behavior on the part of the leader that sets an example for staff to follow that is consistent with the values the leader espouses.

- *Provide Intellectual Stimulation:* Behavior on the part of the leader that challenges staff to reexamine some of the assumptions about their work and to rethink how it can be performed (a type of feedback associated with verbal persuasion).

One dimension of transformational leadership behavior is most directly intended to influence context beliefs, specifically beliefs about the warmth, care and trust available as part of the interpersonal environment of the school:

- *Providing Individualized Support:* Behavior on the part of the leader that indicates respect for staff and concern about their personal feelings and needs.

3.5 Summary

This chapter has described three sets of conditions included in a commitment-building strategy for change - conditions outside (3) and inside the school (6) as well as school leadership (7 dimensions). Prior research was used to justify the specific meaning of each of these categories of conditions and how they are to be measured. That prior research has also suggested how the three sets of conditions interact to effect the implementation of Transition Years practices and student outcomes, although these relationships have been depicted, so far, only in Figure 3.1 without much further elaboration.

4.
The Consequences of Building Commitment

4.1 Overview

As Figure 3.1 indicated, two types of consequences or effects of commitment building in the Transition Years pilot sites were examined. These are implementation of Transition Years practices in the school and changes in student outcomes. Student outcomes were of two sorts and measured in two ways. Students' participation and identification with school was assessed through the collection of student opinion data. Teachers' opinions were also surveyed in regard to a series of more specific student outcomes. This chapter offers more information about each of these consequences.

4.2 Implementation of Transition Years Practices

Ministry of Education and Training documents distributed during the early stages of Transition Years initiatives identified seven categories of practices as important for pilot sites to consider. These included:

- Student assessment, recording and reporting processes
- Curriculum integration
- Core curriculum
- School organization
- Student support services
- Professional development activities
- School-community involvement

Among the first tasks required of the research team was a review of literature concerning exemplary practices in each of these seven categories of practices. That review has been published as a separate volume by the Ministry of Education and Training (Leithwood, 1993). Evidence describing exemplary practices in the Transition Years, supplemented with information from pilot sites concerning their activities, was used as the basis for one of the four surveys used to collect data.

Respondents were asked about the extent to which such exemplary practices were being implemented in their schools.

4.3 Student Outcomes: Participation and Identification

Why Participation and Identification?

By some estimates, significant change in schools is a three to five year process (Fullan, 1991). And that was before the change agenda became as far reaching and open ended as the one proposed by the Transition Years. So detectable changes in typical student outcomes, as a consequence of the initial work in pilot sites, is not a reasonable expectation. Nor does it seem likely that concerns about traditional student outcomes were the stimuli giving rise to Transition Years, in any event. More likely were concerns about Ontario's drop-out rates, early conditions giving rise to at-risk students, equitable treatment of students from varying family backgrounds, preparation for the work world and developing higher order thinking skills.

Given the early stage of the restructuring effort and the concerns giving rise to it, what types of student outcomes would it make sense to use as the dependent variables in this study? Students' participation in and identification with school can be justified as a choice on at least four grounds:

- For many students, dropping out of school is the final step in a long process of gradual disengagement and reduced participation in the formal curriculum of the school, as well as in the school's co-curriculum and more informal social life. Variation in schools' retention rates are likely to be predicted well from estimates of student participation and identification (Finn, 1989).

- Some factors giving rise to students becoming at risk are to be found very early in the child's pre-school and school experiences. Patterns of student participation and identification are sensitive to the consequences of these factors as early as the primary grades. Change in a student's participation and identification is a reliable symptom of problems which should be redressed as early as possible (Lloyd, 1978).

- Variation in student participation and identification is a reliable predictor of variation in such typical student outcomes as math and language achievement (Finn & Cox, 1992).

- While one hopes that Transition Years initiatives have the power eventually to improve a wide array of intellectual and social outcomes, it seems unlikely that initial efforts to implement those practices will have detectable effects on those outcomes, especially on intellectual outcomes. Changes in student participation and identification might be expected fairly quickly, however. Such evidence would provide either the basis for optimism or an early warning that the desired effects of the Transition Years may not materialize without additional intervention.

The Meaning of Participation and Identification

Our orientation to understanding and measuring student participation and engagement is based primarily on the work of Jeremy Finn. In his paper "Withdrawing from School" (1989), Finn describes and justifies a model, the participation-identification model, which explains dropping out as a developmental process. Put positively, the model explains continuing engagement in school as a function of participation in school activities which, along with other influences, results in successful performance. Such performance is esteem building and fosters a bonding or identification with the school.

One central concept in the model is identification with school. The terms "affiliation", "involvement", "attachment", "commitment" and "bonding" encompass the two ideas which, Finn (1989) suggests, constitute a good working definition of identification:

> First, students who identify with school have an internalized conception of belongingness - that they are discernibly part of the school environment and that school constitutes an important part of their own experience. And, second, these individuals value success in school-relevant goals. (p. 123)

Such identification and engagement with school, an internal state, has been found to mediate a wide range of achievement and behavioral outcomes among students.

The second concept central to the model is overt behavior - students' actual participation in school activities. Finn's review of research identifies four levels or degrees of such participation and suggests a strong relationship between these levels of participation and the extent of students' identification with school. Level One participation involves acquiescence to the need to attend school, to be prepared and to respond to teachers' instructions. At Level Two, students take initiative in the classroom, are enthusiastic, may spend extra time on school work and possibly expand their participation into subject-related clubs, science fairs and the like. Level Three participation involves participation in school activities outside of the formal curriculum the social and co-curricular activities of the school, in addition to extensive participation in academic work. Participation in school governance is the fourth level of participation in Finn's model.

Figure 4.1 depicts the participation-identification model as encompassing a developmental cycle. Participation in school is essential to successful school performance, although such performance is also influenced by the quality of instruction and student's ability. Quality of instruction is also an influence on participation. Successful performance influences the students' sense of belonging and valuing of school-related goals. Such identification, in turn, has a positive effect on participation.

Although Finn (1989) does not include it in his model, we have added "family educational culture" as another variable likely to have a direct influence on perceived quality of instruction, level of school participation and successful performance. We were prompted to do this as a consequence of reviewing research on school-community relationships for the literature review associated with this report (Leithwood & Joong, 1993). "Family educational culture" includes parent or guardian engagement in relevant school functions, encouragement to participate in school, assistance with homework and provision of a physical environment conducive to study; it also includes conversation about world events, a healthy diet and adequate sleep.

The survey used in this study to measure participation and identification collected students' opinions about all of the variables shown in Figure 4.1.

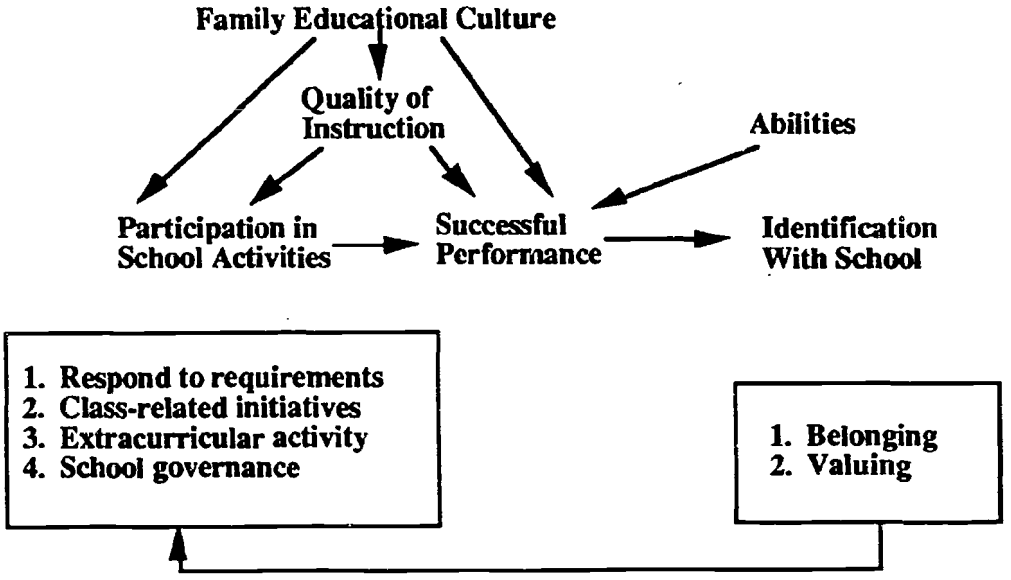

Figure 4.1: The Participation-Identification Model (adapted from Finn, 1989)

4.4 Student Outcomes: Teachers' Opinions

The research team developed eleven statements which could be inferred from relevant documents to be important criteria for judging the success of the Transition Years initiatives. As a third estimate of the progress being made in pilot sites, survey respondents were asked the extent to which these criteria were being met currently and were anticipated to be met in the future. The eleven statements were as follows:

- More positive attitudes by students toward school and learning.
- Growth in students' positive self-concept.
- More cooperative attitude by students toward working with one another.
- Greater clarity for students about their occupational and other life goals.
- Greater clarity for students about their future educational aspirations.
- Increased attendance in class.
- Fewer dropouts.
- Less difficulty by students first entering secondary school in accommodating to the secondary program.
- Less difficulty by students in making the transition from grade 9 to the specialization years.
- Few discipline problems and incidences of suspensions.
- Academic success for a larger proportion of students than was the case previously.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has described the "consequences" portion of the framework used to guide the quantitative study of Transition Years initiatives. Included in the framework, as a whole, are three categories of conditions which describe and explain the extent to which those in Transition Years pilot sites are "committed" to the effort. These include out-of-school conditions, in-school conditions and school leadership. Justification for including conditions within each of these three categories comes from prior empirical evidence and from the theory of motivation outlined in Chapter 2.

The outcomes of Transition Years initiatives included in the framework are of three sorts: implementation of exemplary Transition Years practices; students' participation in and identification with school; and a set of eleven specific criteria inferred to be critical in judging the success of the Transition Years initiatives.

Figure 4.2 describes the framework in more detail than was provided initially by Figure 3.1.

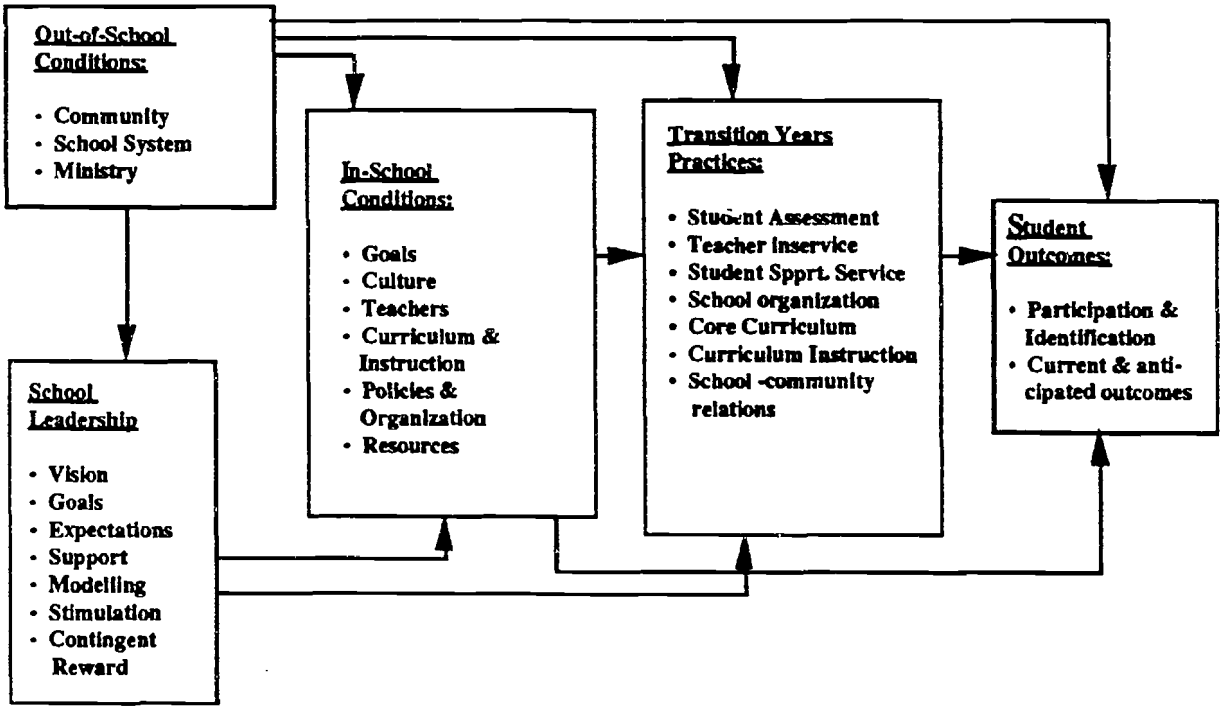

Figure 4.2: Categories, variables and relationships in a model of the school restructuring process based on commitment strategies

5.
Research Methods

5.1 Overview

Six specific questions were examined in this study, through the theoretical lenses described in Chapters 3 and 4. As identified in Chapter 1, these questions concerned changes in educational practices and student outcomes as a consequence of Transition Years pilot site initiatives in both English and French language schools; questions also were asked about the favorableness to pilot site initiatives of conditions inside and outside the school. Forms of school leadership helpful in pilot site efforts were inquired about; so, too, were explanations for variations across pilot sites in the nature of Transition Years practices implemented and changes in several types of student outcomes.

Evidence used to help answer these questions was collected from teachers, administrators and students in Transition Years pilot sites using four survey instruments. One instrument collected responses from students; two were used to collect responses from administrators and teachers and one brief instrument was used with school principals only. This chapter describes the nature of the instruments (all of which are included in the Technical Appendix) and procedures used in their development. Sample selection and data collection procedures are outlined as are methods used to analyze the data.

5.2 Data Collection Instruments

Survey of Transition Years Conditions

This instrument collected data about conditions inside and outside the school influencing pilot site initiatives. Questions were also asked about school leadership and perceived initial student outcomes of the pilot site initiatives. Adapted from a survey refined over the last several years in both Ontario and British Columbia, the survey's 112 items were organized into scales corresponding to each of the conditions included in the conceptual framework guiding the study. Also included

were questions to provide some background information about respondents and schools. Five items asked about specific issues within French language schools only. The organization of the survey was as follows:

Out-of-school Conditions Affecting Implementation
- Ministry
- School system
- Community

In-School Conditions Affecting Implementation
- School goals
- School culture
- Teachers
- Program and instruction
- Policy and organization
- Resources

School Leadership
- Source of leadership
- Transformational practices
- Transactional practices

Outcomes of the Improvement Process
- Perceived current effects on students
- Anticipated future effects on students

Background Information
- Position, experience, gender, age
- School size, level, estimate of students' SES

Item reliability information and results of factor analysis, available from prior uses of earlier versions of the survey, were used to make initial adaptations for use in this study.

Survey of Transition Years Content

An instrument to identify the content or nature of changes being attempted in the pilot sites was developed especially for this study. The primary source of items for this survey was a literature review completed for the former Ministry of Education by the research team in September of 1991. A second source was information provided by the pilot sites through telephone interviews conducted at

the beginning of the study and through the yearly progress reports submitted to the Ministry by pilot site coordinators.

Seven categories of items, 98 in total, were included:

- Student assessment
- Curriculum integration
- Core Curriculum
- School organization
- Student support services
- Teacher inservice
- School/community relations

Five additional items asked about issues specific to French language schools.

A first draft of this survey was tested by a small group of teachers and consultants who were not involved in pilot projects. Their feedback was used to prepare the final version of the instrument.

Survey of Student Participation and Identification

A new instrument also was developed to assess student participation in various activities within their school, their identification with school and their opinion about a number of issues related to such participation and identification. Sets of items, 72 in total, were developed to measure each of five constructs included in our adaptation of the Finn (1989) model described in Chapter 4 (see Figure 4.1). These included:

- *Participation*
  - Response to basic requirements
  - Schoolwork-related initiatives
  - Extracurricular activities
  - Involvement in decision making
- *Identification with school*
  - A sense of belonging
  - Valuing
- *Perceived quality of Instruction*

- *Family educational culture*
- *Perceived abilities*
- *Perceived successful performance in school*

An additional eight items, developed for French language students, asked about student identification with francophone schools.

A draft of this instrument was pilot-tested in several schools with grades 7, 8 and 9 students to assess the clarity of its language.

The School Survey

A 7-item instrument asked principals and their designates to provide contextual information about the school. This instrument was administered only in schools which administered the Survey of Student Participation and Identification.

Sample Selection and Data Collection

The population for the surveys of Transition Years conditions and content was defined by all schools receiving Ministry funding for Transition Years pilot projects. Within these schools, all staff members actively involved in the pilot project were asked to respond. A sub-sample of 170 schools was selected for the student survey with sampling proportional to school panel (elementary, secondary) and school type (English, French) for the pilot sites. Schools were selected randomly within each category and school coordinators or principals were given directions for selecting one class of Transition Years students for the survey. Specifically, the class expected to be most influenced by Transition Years initiatives was to be selected or, in cases where classes were expected to be equally effected, the selection was to be random. The survey of conditions took place in January 1992 while the remaining instruments were administered in May of that year.

The Transition Years coordinator at the school board level or a designate became the contact person for distribution of surveys within his/her school board. Pre-packaged materials were sent to the contact by courier and then, usually distributed

to the school through the school board mailing system. Postage-paid return envelopes were provided for individual staff members to ensure anonymity and for convenience. Research staff contacted school boards and schools as necessary to determine the most accurate estimate of the number of participants within each pilot project and to follow up on late returns.

Table 5.1 indicates the population size, number of actual respondents and response rate for each of the four surveys. Because the sample for students was one class within each of the sampled schools, there were no data on the potential number of individual students. However, 3557 individual students responded in the 152 classes for an average of about 24 students per school. As noted above, only one copy of the School Survey (for principals only) was sent to each of the schools with student respondents.

Table 5.1
Population, Sample and Response Rates for the Surveys

	Individuals			*Schools*		
Survey:	*Population*	*Sample*	*Rate(%)*	*Population*	*Sample*	*Rate(%)*
Conditions	2319	1580	68.1	396	350	88.4
Content	2319	1289	55.6	396	319	80.6
Student	unknown	3557		165	152	92.1
School	152	147	96.7	152	147	96.7

5.3 Data Analysis

Following initial data entry and cleaning, an aggregated data file with the school means for all items was created for each of the four sets of data provided in response to each of the four surveys. Reliability checks were done on all the scales. Means and standard deviations were calculated for all items as well as the scales constructed using these items as a basis. Data were combined to allow additional analysis of data from schools for which student data were available. This data set

consisted of 152 schools, for which conditions data were available, 135 for which content and school data were available. This comprehensive data set was used for analysis involving teacher and student perceptions. Additional analyses were carried out with data for those items specific to the francophone population.

Chapters 3 and 4 described our commitment-building strategy for change: the strategy includes out-of-school conditions, in-school conditions, school leadership, Transition Years practices, and student outcomes. Figures 3.1 and 4.2 in Chapters 3 and 4 also displayed the nature of the relationships among these five "constructs" justified by evidence from previous research. The most comprehensive analysis performed with the total set of Transition Years survey data was intended to accomplish four purposes:

- to assess the extent to which the overall model formed by the five categories and proposed relationships "fit" Transition Years survey data;
- to assess the relative strength of relationships among categories in the model (e.g., how strong is the relationship between school leadership and in-school conditions?);
- to identify which conditions within each category contributed most to the strength of the relationships (e.g., which of the six dimensions of transformational leadership has the strongest relationship with school culture?);
- to determine how much of the variation across pilot sites in implementation of Transition Years practices and student outcomes is explained by the model.

Path analysis was used to accomplish these four purposes, using the LISREL program (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989). Path analysis allows the researcher to estimate the influence of specific variables on other variables while controlling or sifting out the influence of all other variables. Path coefficients are something like correlation coefficients but they indicate the unique contribution of a variable, taking into account the contributions of all other variables that have been measured. Those wishing to know more about this form of analysis may wish to read the Technical Appendix for this report.

Related t-tests were calculated to compare the extent of implementation of different educational practices. Discriminant function analyses were used to assess

significance of differences in the response patterns of French versus English language schools and elementary versus secondary school staffs. Discriminant function analysis considers responses to an entire set of items simultaneously to identify items which best discriminate between the groups selected for comparison. Tabular summaries of results of these analyses are in the Technical Appendix; descriptions of the results appear in relevant sections of this report. Table 5.2 describes the population and sample by language of instruction and school level.

Table 5.2
Population and Sample Schools by Language of Instruction and School Level*

	English	French	Elementary	Secondary
Population for Staff Surveys:	354	42	259	136
Sample:				
Conditions	317	32	217	131
Content	289	30	199	119
Population for Student Survey:	150	15	104	60
Sample	137	15	98	53

* An intermediate school was dropped from the elementary/secondary breakdown.

Part B

Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

6.
The Extent to Which Transition Years Practices Have Been Implemented

6.1 Overview

The Survey of Transition Years Content included 98 items distributed among seven categories of school practice with 11 to 17 items per category. These categories, identified by the Ministry as critical areas for change, included:

- Student assessment, recording and reporting processes
- Curriculum integration
- Core Curriculum
- School organization
- Student support services
- Teacher inservice
- School/community relations

Specific practices within each of the categories were identified through a comprehensive review of research about exemplary school practices in the transitions years (Leithwood, 1993); this review has been published separately by the Ministry (Exemplary Practices in the Transition Years). Survey respondents were asked how *frequently* they were implementing these Transition Years practices. Hence, for purposes of the study, "degree of implementation" meant "frequency of use", as perceived by teachers and school administrators. Frequency of use, it should be noted, is not the only, nor likely the most defensible way, to define degree of implementation. A more defensible approach would measure qualitative changes in the nature of use of a given practice (perhaps as well as frequency), using methods such as those developed by Hall and Loucks (1978), Loucks and Crandall (1982), or Leithwood and Montgomery (1987). However, applying these methods requires resources for data collection substantially beyond those available for this research.

The remainder of this chapter consists of three sections. The following section describes the extent to which the seven broad categories of educational practices had been implemented. Section 6.3 describes the extent of implementation of specific

practices within each of the broad categories and the final section summarizes the results for the chapter as a whole.

6.2 The Extent to Which Seven Categories of Transition Years Practices Have Been Implemented

Respondents within schools were requested to rate the extent of implementation of specific practices within those categories addressed by their pilot projects. Individual ratings were then aggregated to the school level to obtain an estimate of implementation for the school for each of the selected categories. Table 6.1 indicates the percentage of schools addressing each category as well as the mean rating and standard deviation by category. The rating was done with a five-point, frequency scale, ranging from 1 = never to 5 = always. The scale reliability or internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for each category is also reported in Table 6.1.

Schools chose to rate from 1 to 7 categories of Transition Years practices in schools - on average about 4. The standard deviation of 1.83 reflects this considerable variation among the schools in the focus of their implementation efforts. That is to say, two-thirds of the schools chose to focus on any number of categories of practices ranging from about 2 to about 6 (i.e., 4.0 ± 1.83).

Table 6.1

Percentage of Schools Addressing Each Category of Educational Practice, Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities

(N = 319)

Category	% of Schools(a)	Mean Rating(b)	S.D.(c)	Cronbach's Alpha
1.Teacher inservice	83.7	3.49	.54	.92
2.Student assessment	83.1	3.83	.31	.79
3.School-community relations	76.5	3.51	.47	.87
4.Student support services	72.4	3.49	.55	.88

Table 6.1 (cont'd)

Category	% of Schools(a)	Mean Rating(b)	S.D.(c)	Cronbach's Alpha
5.School and classroom organization	67.1	3.55	.49	.75
6.Curriculum integration	66.5	3.48	.53	.86
7.Core curriculum	62.4	3.66	.50	.87

a Percentage of schools focusing on specific components as part of Transition Years pilot project.
b Average rating. Frequency of use scale was 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = frequently, and 5 = always.
c Standard deviation. Two-thirds of schools fall within the range defined by Average +/- S.D.

Tests of significance (Related t-tests) were done to test for differences in ratings between pairs of educational practice categories. Across schools, the differences between the two highest rated (i.e., most fully implemented) categories of practice, student assessment and core curriculum, and all other categories were significant. Ratings of the five categories significantly lower were very similar (close to 3.5), representing an extent of implementation greater than "sometimes", but less than "frequently." Results for each pair of practices are provided in the Technical Appendix.

Discriminant function analyses (see Technical Appendix for explanation) were used to determine whether these ratings of the degree of implementation of Transition Years practices varied for elementary versus secondary schools and English language versus French language schools. Overall, elementary school respondents tended to rate higher than secondary school respondents implementation of core curriculum and school community relations. Secondary school respondents rated higher implementation of student support services: there were no other elementary/secondary school differences in ratings of Transition Years practices. There were no differences in the overall ratings of French versus English language respondents.

6.3 The Extent to Which Specific Transition Years Practices Have Been Implemented

Ratings for the frequency of use of specific Transition Years practices within categories varied widely. Mean ratings and standard deviations for the specific practices are reported in Tables 6.2 to 6.8; the items in each table are listed in rank order beginning with the practice receiving the highest rating.

Teacher Inservice (Table 6.2) was the practice reported as being implemented by the highest percentage (83.7%) of pilot project schools. Within that category, the highest rating among the 13 items was given to the claim that inservice was intended to contribute to knowledge about effective classroom practice with an average rating of about 4 (M = 3.89). Inservice was also considered to be strengthening professional relationships within the school (M = 3.72). Personal professional development was reported as occurring through curriculum development related to the Transition Years (M = 3.70). Rated as least frequent occurrences were sharing expertise across panels (M = 3.30), having significant input into how inservice is done (M = 3.28), and studying the rationale for introducing the initiatives as part of inservice (M = 3.26). The spread from highest to lowest rating in this category was the smallest of all seven categories with only a .63 difference between the means for the highest and lowest items.

Table 6.2

Teacher Inservice: Descriptive Statistics by Item

(N = 267; Scale: 1=never to 5=always)

Item	Mean	S.D.
Category Total	**3.49**	**.54**
1. Our inservice is intended to make a contribution to what is known about effective classroom practice.	3.89	.64
2. Inservice activities strengthen professional relationships within my school.	3.72	.65

Table 6.2 (cont'd)

Item		Mean	S.D.
3.	Developing curriculum for the Transition Years provides opportunities for our own professional development.	3.70	.81
4.	Our inservice draws on the available research on effective classroom practice.	3.69	.68
5.	Our professional growth is enhanced by how the school administration delegates leadership to teachers.	3.57	.75
6.	We help identify the appropriate goals for our inservice.	3.53	.77
7.	Our inservice includes opportunities to practice what we learn and then discuss our experiences.	3.40	.75
8.	We assess our own needs for professional development related to implementing the Transition Years initiative.	3.38	.76
9.	Our inservice program uses a wide variety of strategies (e.g,, observation, demonstration, discussion, practice and feedback, peer coaching).	3.38	.81
10.	We participate in meaningful evaluation of our own inservice.	3.37	.78
11.	Our inservice includes a sharing of expertise across elementary and secondary panels.	3.30	.86
12.	We have significant input into how our inservice is done.	3.28	.81
13.	We study the rationale for introducing the Transition Years initiative as part of our inservice.	3.26	.85

Discriminant function analysis suggested that elementary staffs reported use of a wider variety of inservice strategies as well as inservice that draws on available research; also administrations' delegation of teacher leadership was a greater factor in professional development as was sharing of expertise across panels. Secondary staffs reported more professional development opportunities through curriculum development. They also focused more on studying the rationale for Transition Year policy. Teacher input about how inservice was done also was reported to occur more frequently at the secondary than at the elementary school level.

When responses from English and French language staffs were compared French staffs rated four practices higher and English staffs rated five higher. Practices rated higher by French staffs included opportunity to practise and discuss their inservice, drawing on available research, participation in defining inservice goals, and studying the rationale for the Transition Years initiative. Practices rated higher by English staffs are described by items 3, 5, 10, 11 and 12 in Table 6.2.

Specific student assessment practices (Table 6.3) were also receiving attention in over 83% of pilot project schools. The highest ratings for the 17 specific practices included in this category were telling students what criteria will be used for evaluation (M = 4.66) and what aspects of their work will be evaluated (M = 4.57). Teachers frequently assessed a variety of products, provided specific feedback to students and had clearly defined expectations for their students. Practices used least frequently were student self-evaluation (M = 3.38) and peer evaluation (M = 3.20). These observations are strongly supported in the case study data in Volume 3. Only slightly more frequent was agreement with colleagues within the school on achievement standards (M = 3.44) and on criteria for student assessment (M = 3.41).

Table 6.3

Student Assessment: Descriptive Statistics by Item

(N = 265; Scale: 1=never to 5=always)

Item		Mean	S.D.
Category Total		**3.83**	**.31**
1.	I tell my students the criteria that I use to evaluate their achievement.	4.66	.39
2.	I tell my students what aspects of their work I am evaluating.	4.57	.45
3.	I assess student products (e.g., project reports, essays, portfolios.)	4.40	.49
4.	I use student assessment information to provide specific feedback to students.	4.24	.50
5.	Students need to meet or exceed clearly defined standards in my class.	4.06	.55
6.	I use a sophisticated method (e.g., weighted average) for combining marks from throughout the term when determining final grades.	3.89	.95

Table 6.3 (cont'd)

Item		Mean	S.D.
7.	My assessment practices motivate student learning.	3.84	.44
8.	I use non-test methods (e.g., observation, interview) for assessing student performance.	3.84	.54
9.	The match between my student assessment practices and intended learning outcomes is high.	3.84	.41
10.	I compare students' current performance to their previous level of performance.	3.76	.65
11.	I assess Transition Years students' higher order thinking skills	3.69	.56
12.	I use student assessment information for planning individual programs.	3.66	.65
13.	I attend professional development activities focused on student assessment.	3.45	.62
14.	My colleagues at school and I agree about achievement standards for Transition Years students.	3.44	.68
15.	My colleagues at school and I agree about criteria for student assessment in the Transition Years.	3.41	.66
16.	I use student self-evaluation as an assessment strategy.	3.38	.62
17.	I use peer evaluation as an assessment strategy.	3.20	.62

Analysis of response patterns for elementary as compared with secondary schools indicated that elementary staffs were more likely to (a) tell students what evaluation criteria were being used, (b) assess a variety of products, (c) compare a student's current and past performance and (d) use assessment to plan individual programs. Secondary staffs more frequently told students what aspects of their work were being evaluated and were more likely to assess students' higher-order thinking skills. They also used more sophisticated methods for determining final grades, perhaps indicating more focus on summative evaluation than was the case for elementary staffs.

The five practices more likely to be given higher ratings by French language staffs included assessment that motivates student learning, using sophisticated methods for combining term marks for final grades, agreeing with colleagues about standards,

providing specific feedback to students and using student self-evaluation - more likely to be rated higher by English staffs were items 1, 2, 11, 12 and 17 in Table 6.3.

The nature and quality of relationships between the school and parents/community were addressed by the 13 items for which responses are reported in Table 6.4. Encouragement of interaction between teachers and parents (M = 4.40) and promotion of two-way communication between school and family about programs (M = 4.15) were the most frequent practices in this area. Provision of student and parent access to community services was also reported as a frequent occurrence (M = 4.02). Rarely or infrequently were community members involved in the school's policy planning or review (2.54) or in program development (2.51). Data collected directly from parents and reported in Volume 3 confirm this trend of low involvement in this respect. Moreover, their own perceptions of extent of parental involvement in two-way communication between school and family seem less generous than those reported by teachers. This may reflect a typicality of the cases, or a genuine difference of perception between teachers and parents on this issue. Greatest variation in implementation within this category ($S.D.$ = 1.00) was cooperation with business in implementing co-operative education programs; as might be expected, such practice was less frequent in elementary as opposed to secondary schools, although there also was considerable variation among secondary schools.

Table 6.4

School and Community Relations: Descriptive Statistics by Item

(N = 244; Scale: 1=never to 5=always)

Item	Mean	S.D.
Category Total	**3.51**	**.47**
1. Teacher-parent interaction is encouraged.	4.40	.57
2. Our school promotes clear, two-way communication between school and family regarding school programs.	4.15	.58
3. Our school provides access to community support services for children and families.	4.02	.64

Table 6.4 (cont'd)

Item		Mean	S.D.
4.	Most members of the local community view our school in a positive light.	3.98	.58
5.	Our school encourages parent involvement in children's homework.	3.83	.78
6.	Our school responds to the expressed needs of different community groups.	3.73	.65
7.	Our school helps parents develop as influential decision-makers within the school.	3.39	.75
8.	Our school provides parents with knowledge of techniques to assist children in learning at home.	3.31	.76
9.	The business/industrial sector cooperates with our school in implementing co-operative education programs for the Transition Years.	3.28	1.00
10.	Members of the community are used as specialized resources in the regular curriculum.	3.15	.76
11.	Our school involves parents in instructional and support roles in the school.	3.09	.84
12.	Our school involves members of the community in policy planning and review.	2.54	.78
13.	Our school involves members of the community in program development.	2.51	.82

Elementary school respondents reported more direct involvement of parents in programs and instruction within the school; they also reported more involvement with their students' learning at home by encouraging parents to participate in their children's homework and by providing parents with techniques to assist their children. Secondary schools were more likely to provide access to community services, a more indirect form of assistance to families. These staffs reported helping parents develop more influential roles in school decision making, but this involvement appeared to be more in the areas of policy, than in program, planning and review. An exception to this tendency was cooperation with the business sector in more frequently implementing cooperative education programs for Transition Years students.

French language staffs gave higher ratings to five practices related to school-community relations. Those practices included encouraging parent involvement in homework, responding to needs of different community groups, involving parents in instructional and support roles and helping parents develop as influential decision-makers in the school. They also were more likely to report their community as viewing their school positively. The four practices rated higher by English staffs were described by items 1, 3, 8 and 13 in Table 6.4.

The extent to which sixteen different practices, associated with student support services, were being implemented is reported in Table 6.5. School administration views of the central role for guidance and student support within the school was rated highest (M = 4.04). The use of individual counselling with students was also rated as "frequent" (M = 3.96). Among the least frequently used practices were peer counselling (M = 2.94) and parent involvement in guidance and support services (M = 2.80). Involvement of student support personnel in cross-curricular instruction teams happened relatively infrequently (M = 3.07), perhaps because such teams were not often activated. But individual classroom teachers were reported to deliver such services within their regular class work somewhat more frequently (M = 3.63).

Table 6.5

Student Support Services: Descriptive Statistics by Item

(N = 231; Scale: 1=never to 5=always)

Item	Mean	S.D.
Category Total	**3.49**	**.55**
1. The administration views the Guidance/Student Services Department as playing a central role in the school.	4.04	.83
2. Individual counselling is used to provide counselling services for our students.	3.96	.73
3. My guidance/student support role is an important part of my job as a Transition Years teacher.	3.89	.71
4. The school administration (e.g., principal, vice principal, department/division heads) participates in orienting students to secondary school.	3.79	.83
5. Career planning is a central focus of the Guidance/Student Services Department.	3.73	.77

Table 6.5 (cont'd)

Item		Mean	S.D.
6.	Guidance/student support services personnel are involved in implementing the Transition Years initiative.	3.71	.90
7.	Teachers are involved in delivering aspects of the guidance/ student support services as part of their regular class work.	3.63	.87
8.	The school staff perceives the guidance program to be effective.	3.50	.70
9.	Specialized programs for assisting youth in crisis are a part of the school guidance program.	3.48	.89
10.	We use teacher-advisor programs to assist students.	3.43	.94
11.	There are formalized and ongoing contacts between the elementary and secondary school guidance personnel.	3.30	.87
12.	Group counselling is used to provide counselling services for our students.	3.24	.82
13.	Inservice for teachers supports our guidance/student support services.	3.21	.87
14.	Cross-curricular instruction teams include guidance/student support personnel.	3.07	.96
15.	Peer counselling is used to provide counselling services for our students.	2.94	.94
16.	Parents are involved in the guidance/student support services in our school.	2.80	.83

Elementary schools more frequently involved the classroom teacher in delivery of support services; such delivery was more likely to occur through group counselling. At the same time, elementary staffs perceived their inservice to be more supportive of their student support practices. Secondary administrators were reported to attribute a central role to their guidance and student support department (presumably reflecting a difference in the departmental structure of secondary schools and in the reduced involvement of classroom teachers in program delivery). More variety in delivery strategies was reported for secondary schools with more individual and peer counselling, although peer counselling was not used frequently in either secondary or elementary contexts. Career planning was given a more central focus in secondary schools as were special programs for "at-risk" students. Secondary staff also reported more formalized, ongoing contact between secondary and elementary school guidance personnel, a finding not corroborated by elementary staffs.

Five practices related to delivery of student services were more likely to be rated higher by French staffs; four were rated higher by English staffs. Practices rated higher by French staffs were the central role given to support services, involvement of classroom teachers in support service delivery, provision of programs for youth in crisis, use of teacher advisor programs and attribution of priority to career planning. The practices rated higher by anglophone staffs are described by items 2, 4, 6 and 16 in Table 6.5.

Table 6.6 provides ratings about implementation of aspects of school and classroom organization. Two practices used most frequently were the assignment of students to heterogeneous ability groups within the school (M = 4.32) and within the class (M = 4.13); this is evidence of an effort by pilot sites to comply with the "destreaming" emphasis of the Ministry's Transition Years initiatives. Home-base classes also were used frequently to increase students sense of belonging (M = 4.01). The two practices used least were homogeneous ability groupings for gifted students in a few areas of high aptitude and interest (M = 2.97) and recruitment of particularly talented staff to teach lower ability students (M = 2.93). Greatest variation among schools in implementing organizational practices ($S.D.$ = 1.07) was to be found, first, in the practice of working in teacher teams responsible for the same group of students (results were similar in both elementary and secondary schools) and, second, in the practice of providing students with extended blocks of time with one or two teachers (such variation is likely attributable to differences in elementary and secondary organizations).

Table 6.6

School Organization: Descriptive Statistics by Item

(N = 214; Scale: 1=never to 5=always)

Item		Mean	S.D.
	Category Total	**3.55**	**.49**
1.	Students in the Transition Years are assigned to classes of heterogeneous ability groups.	4.32	.80

Table 6.6 (cont'd)

Item		Mean	S.D.
2.	Students in the Transition Years work in heterogeneous ability groups within their classes.	4.13	.71
3.	Home-base classes have been organized to increase students' sense of belonging.	4.01	.97
4.	Alternative programs are available to accommodate students at risk (e.g., co-op placement, work experience, remediation).	3.60	.90
5.	Homogeneous ability grouping of students is limited to a small proportion of Transition Years students' schedules.	3.56	.87
6.	Procedures for allocating students to a homogeneous group provide for review of allocation decisions and reallocation.	3.51	.73
7.	Transition Years teachers work in teams in which several teachers assume responsibility for the same group of students.	3.48	1.07
8.	Student timetables provide for an extended block of time with one or two teachers.	3.35	1.07
9.	Other students work in homogeneous ability groups in those areas in which they experience special difficulty.	3.28	.69
10.	More than average resources are allocated to lower ability students.	3.26	.79
11.	Criteria used to allocate students to homogeneous groups focus only on instructional purposes.	3.24	.80
12.	Activities involving both elementary and secondary students are used to ease transition to secondary school.	3.15	.93
13.	Gifted students work in homogeneous ability groups in one or two areas of especially high aptitude or interest.	2.97	.93
14.	The most talented teachers possible are recruited to teach lower ability students.	2.93	.84

Elementary schools were more likely to work in heterogeneous ability groupings within their classes and to use homogeneous ability groupings for students in areas of special difficulty. Procedures providing for review and reallocation of students to homogeneous groupings were more likely to be in place within elementary schools. Also, student schedules which created extended blocks of time with one or two teachers were more likely to be practiced in elementary schools. Secondary staffs, on the other hand, reported more focus on instructional purposes only for allocating students to homogeneous groupings. Alternative programs for at-risk students were more common in secondary schools, consistent with practices reported for student support services. Teacher teams assuming responsibility for the same group

of students also were more frequent in secondary schools, an unexpected result in the face of what one might assume to be less flexibility in timetabling for Transition Years students in secondary schools. The team approach may be a reflection of more joint efforts by secondary teachers in pilot sites than normally would occur outside the context of implementing Transition Years initiatives.

The five practices more likely to be rated higher by French language staffs included using home-base classes, allocating extra resources to lower ability students, using instruction-related criteria for allocations to homogeneous groupings, using activities involving both elementary and secondary students, and limiting homogeneous ability groupings. The three practices rated higher by English language staffs were items 8, 9 and 13 in Table 6.6.

Mean ratings for implementation of all 14 specific practices associated with Curriculum Integration (Table 6.7) fell within the "sometimes" to "frequently" range (i.e., the means for all the practices were between 3 and 4). Highest rated practices were helping students understand how particular topics related to the curriculum area as a whole (M = 3.76) and using instructional strategies compatible with those of teachers in other curriculum areas (M = 3.71). Rated second lowest (M = 3.28) was teachers from different subject areas working together to reduce redundancies in their curricula. The least frequently used form of integration (M = 3.01) was fusing different subjects into a single subject; elementary schools were more likely to report using this form of curriculum integration. On the other hand, an approach to integration that involved drawing connections between subjects taught separately received the fourth highest rating (M = 3.66); similar ratings were reported for making linkages between the curriculum and students' own lives and helping students learn skills and applications that connect with the world outside school.

Table 6.7

Curriculum Integration: Descriptive Statistics by Item

(N = 212; Scale: 1=never to 5=always)

Item		Mean	S.D.
	Category Total	**3.48**	**.53**
1.	I help students understand how particular topics being studied currently relate to the curriculum area as a whole.	3.76	.68
2.	I use instructional strategies that are compatible with those used by teachers in other areas of the curriculum.	3.71	.60
3.	Student assessment and evaluation procedures reflect the intended outcomes of the integrated curriculum.	3.69	.69
4.	Approach? Drawing connections and noting parallels between subjects that are taught separately (e.g., drawing on communication skills within the science curriculum or teaching related topics concurrently in different subjects)	3.66	.67
5.	Curriculum integration makes meaningful linkages between the curriculum and students' own lives and experiences.	3.66	.72
6.	Curriculum integration helps students connect with the world outside school through "real life" learning skills and applications.	3.63	.69
7.	Curricula are being modified to help students discover connections and commonalties across disciplines.	3.55	.68
8.	There is consensus among teachers who are developing an integrated curriculum.	3.43	.74
9.	Approach? Inserting elements from one subject into another subject without changing the structure of the latter (e.g., exploring the art of the relevant period within a history unit)	3.43	.66
10.	The integrated curriculum is giving greater control to students in determining their learning.	3.39	.73
11.	Approach? Organizing thematic units around topics that integrate subjects within a coherent whole (e.g., using a topic selected by students as the unifying principle for cross-curricular study).	3.38	.78
12.	Approach? Reducing some of the differences among subjects for greater compatibility across subjects (e.g., agreeing on a common way to carry out inquiry in various subjects).	3.35	.67
13.	Teachers of different subject areas are working together to reduce redundancies in their curricula.	3.28	.75
14.	Approach? Fusing different subjects into a single subject (e.g., English and social studies into humanities).	3.01	.95

There were no statistically significant differences between elementary and secondary schools in responses related to Curriculum Integration. Three practices were rated higher by French staffs and three by English staffs, although the differences were weakest within this category. Francophones were more likely to report greater control for students in determining their learning through curriculum integration, inserting elements from one subject into another, and helping students understand how particular topics relate to a curriculum area. Anglophones rated higher the three practices described in items 8, 11 and 14 in Table 6.7.

The final category of educational practice, Core Curriculum (Table 6.8), included 11 specific practices. Sixty-two percent of schools claimed to be implementing practices in this category. Most fully implemented practices were a broad repertoire of teaching strategies to deliver the core curriculum (M = 4.06) and using a core curriculum to develop students as well-rounded human beings (M = 4.04). Lowest rated were two practices facilitating delivery of a core curriculum; neither timetable adjustments to provide larger blocks of time to deliver the core (M = 3.03) nor core delivery through team teaching (M = 2.82) were reported to be used with much frequency in the pilot schools.

Elementary staffs reported greater use of a core curriculum to develop well-rounded students. They also reported greater coherence across subject areas and, consistent with their reported organizational practices, larger time blocks to deliver core curriculum. Secondary schools rated higher a central focus on providing higher quality instruction; this was reflected in greater involvement of teachers within the school in developing specific aspects of a core curriculum. In secondary schools, this curriculum was seen as more frequently enhancing the relevance of education to students' own experiences.

Two practices related to core curriculum were more likely to be rated higher by French staffs and three by English staffs. Francophones were more likely to report their core curriculum as providing high quality instruction and developing students as well rounded human beings. The practices rated higher by English staffs are items 1, 3 and 9 in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8

Core Curriculum

(N = 199; Scale: 1=never to 5=always)

Item		Mean	S.D.
	Category Total	**3.66**	**.50**
1.	A broad repertoire of teaching strategies is required for delivery of our core curriculum.	4.06	.65
2.	Our core curriculum develops students as well-rounded human beings.	4.04	.62
3.	Our core curriculum emphasizes developing students' commitment to learning.	3.89	.67
4.	Provision of instruction of higher quality is central to our core curriculum.	3.89	.68
5.	Our core curriculum stimulates a broad range of student achievement (i.e., beyond the intellectual-cognitive area).	3.80	.67
6.	Our core curriculum enhances the relevance of students' education to their own experiences.	3.75	.63
7.	Specifics of the core curriculum are being developed primarily by teachers within our school.	3.70	.87
8.	Our core curriculum provides coherence across subject areas.	3.65	.65
9.	Our core curriculum is used to reduce fragmentation in student programs.	3.56	.72
10.	Larger than normal time blocks are provided to deliver the core curriculum.	3.03	1.10
11.	Team teaching is used to deliver our core curriculum.	2.82	.86

Five additional practices were rated only by French language staffs, three of them related to the teacher inservice category. Francophones reported frequent availability of professional development resources in French (M = 4.00) and somewhat less access to French inservice for Transition Years (M = 3.58), although they did not receive inservice mainly in English (M = 1.57). Francophone staffs reported that their students were almost always encouraged to pursue their education in French (M = 4.74). Their schools also promoted the "fait francais" in their local community (M = 4.53).

6.4 Summary

The Survey of Transition Years Content asked pilot project staffs in May 1992 to indicate how frequently they were implementing specific practices in seven broad categories advocated for the Transition Years by the Ministry of Education: teacher inservice, student assessment, school-community relations, student support services, school and classroom organization, curriculum integration and core curriculum. Respondents were asked to complete only those categories that were being addressed in their school. In summary, the results were as follows:

1. Pilot project schools were generally addressing about four categories of Transition Years practice. Teacher inservice and student assessment were being addressed in the most schools, although the extent of implementation differed, with assessment practices being most fully implemented. Initiatives related to core curriculum were selected by the fewest schools, but within those schools the extent of implementation of such practices was higher than all other practices except student assessment. Overall, the estimates of implementation were not high for any of the categories; all category means indicated implementation levels between "sometimes" and "frequently" and there was considerable variability across schools.

2. Seven of the 98 specific Transition Years practices within four of the categories were awarded especially low ratings (M = 2.9 or less). These practices were:
   - involving members of the community in policy planning and review;
   - involving members of the community in program development;
   - using peer counselling to provide counselling services to students;
   - involving parents in student support services;
   - having gifted students work in homogeneous ability groups in a few areas of special interest;
   - recruiting the most talented teachers possible to teach lower ability students;
   - using team teaching as one means of implementing core curriculum.

3. Fourteen specific Transition Years practices were given relatively high ratings (M = 4.0 or higher) with respect to frequency of use. These practices were:
   - informing students of criteria used to evaluate their achievement;
   - telling students what aspects of their work is being evaluated;

- assessing a variety of student products;
- using assessment information to provide specific feedback;
- setting clearly defined standards that students need to meet or exceed;
- encouraging teacher-parent interaction;
- promoting two-way communication between school and family about school programs;
- providing access to community services for students and families through the school;
- the consideration, by school administration, of guidance/student support services as central in the school;
- assigning students to classes of heterogeneous ability grouping;
- working in heterogeneous ability groupings within classes;
- organizing home base classes to increase students' sense of belonging;
- requiring a broad repertoire of teaching strategies to deliver a core curriculum;
- developing students as well-rounded human beings through the core curriculum.

4. Providing teacher inservice was clearly a priority for pilot projects; 84% of schools reported such activities. Teacher inservice practices were perceived to be having some impact on the professional growth of individual teachers as well as enhancing the professional culture of the school. This effect on professional culture is evident in reports of some strengthening of professional relationships, administrators' delegation of teacher leadership, and involvement of teachers in setting goals for inservice. However, the delivery of inservice appeared to be rather limited, both in the breadth of strategies used and in the involvement of teachers in decisions about how inservice could best be done. Sharing of expertise across panels also appeared not to be a significant inservice strategy.

5. Student assessment was a popular focus for pilot site initiatives with 83% of schools engaging in activities to modify assessment and evaluation practices related to the Transition Years. Teachers attributed importance to ensuring their students were aware of what work was being assessed and how their teachers assessed it. Although a variety of assessment practices were reportedly used for evaluation of Transition Years students, the process of designing

strategies and conducting evaluations appeared to be carried out largely by individual teachers working on their own. Students appeared to be the objects of evaluation rather than participants in the process, and less traditional forms of assessment (e.g., self and peer evaluation) were being used less frequently.

6. Seventy-seven percent of the pilot projects were working to improve school-community relationships. This suggests a priority for building, or strengthening, partnerships in the community beyond the school system. Although staff members generally felt their school was viewed favorably by their community, they continued to place emphasis on communications with, and service to, the local community. Considerably less evident was the direct involvement of community members in school-level decisions and processes.

7. The pattern of student support services implementation was similar to the pattern for student assessment. There was recognition of the importance of student services within the Transition Years and in the involvement of classroom teachers and/or guidance personnel in carrying out the function. The strategies appeared to focus more on individual efforts (classroom teacher or counsellor) than on group/peer counselling or cross-curricular and cross-panel efforts.

8. About two thirds of the pilot projects were addressing school and classroom organization issues. In those sites, working with heterogeneous groupings of students appeared to be a high priority. Flexibility in grouping appeared less frequent primarily because homogeneous groups were rarely used as a response to meet special needs, aptitudes or interests of students. Of course, policy makers will note that in spite of the highly visible debate in the province around "destreaming", one third of the pilot sites appeared not to be working in that direction yet.

9. Finally, practices related to curriculum integration tended to involve strategies for the individual classroom teacher: making links to other curricular areas, life experiences and student interests. Less common were the practices of working with colleagues or students to bridge disciplines or reducing redundancies through curriculum coordination. Practices for the core curriculum follow a similar pattern: a broad and high quality repertoire of teaching strategies and

student-centred goals. Less evident were reduction in fragmentation of student programs and team teaching efforts.

10. Differences in practices attributable to school level were most evident in student support services, reflecting not so much a major change in practice within either elementary or secondary schools (although there appears to be a move tc greater diversity of strategies for service delivery in secondary schools) as the specialization within secondary schools where student support services/guidance departments have a more clearly defined role, particularly related to career planning and programs for youth in crisis. Differences between school levels in practices related to school and community relations were also quite strong with a tendency toward closer ties between school and parents/guardians in elementary schools and toward more interaction with the broader community in secondary schools. Almost as strong were the differences in practice related to school and classroom organization; generally, there was greater flexibility in timetabling and grouping within elementary schools and more attention to programs accommodating at-risk students and teacher team work within secondary schools. Although there were significant differences attributable to school level between other specific practices, these differences were somewhat weaker in response patterns for practices related to core curriculum, student assessment and teacher inservice.

11. French language schools were reported to be promoting the "fait francais" within the francophone community as well as promoting the continuation of studies in French for their students. There was no significant difference between French and English language staffs in their overall ratings of the seven broad categories of educational practices. However, there were differences in their ratings for specific practices within each of the categories.

7.
Student Participation in School and the Influence of Transition Years Initiatives on Other Student Outcomes

7.1 Overview

The landscape of educational research and evaluation has been cratered by the missiles hurled at its dependent variables: standardized achievement tests have drawn a disproportionate amount of this unfriendly fire. Such violence typically is provoked by sentiments to the effect that the dependent variables (or their measures) are too narrowly conceived or just plain irrelevant as criteria against which to judge the progress or impact of whatever is the educational initiative serving as the independent variable. Student participation in and identification with school, as one set of dependent measures of Transition Years initiatives, was chosen to minimize the chances of more hostilities. Participation and identification appear to be: (a) reasonable proxies for a wide range of social, emotional and intellectual outcomes; (b) significant predictors of student dropout and retention; and (c) a promising way of estimating time on task - itself a proxy for basic skills achievement.

In addition to student participation and identification data collected directly from students, teachers were also asked to estimate the extent to which eleven specific, policy-related student outcomes had been achieved as a result of their Transition Years initiatives as well as their anticipated achievement. Section 7.2 reports the results of evidence collected from students about their participation in and identification with school and relationships among these variables are reported in Section 7.3. Section 7.4 describes teacher opinion concerning student outcomes. These results are summarized in Section 7.5.

7.2 The Extent of Student Participation in School

The Survey of Student Participation and Identification asked students about their perception of:

- their level of participation in school;
- their identification with school or engagement;
- their quality of instruction;
- their family educational culture;
- their ability at school;
- their performance at school.

The meaning of these categories and their possible relationships was explained in Chapter 4.

Students rated most of the 74 items on the survey using a four-point scale indicating extent of agreement with each statement (1 = strongly disagree; 4 = strongly agree). The scale mid-point was 2.5. Several items, originally rated on a five-point frequency scale, were recoded to a four-point scale during data analysis. Individual student responses were aggregated to the school level for analysis. Table 7.1 reports mean ratings and standard deviations for each set of issues addressed by the survey and the individual statements associated with each issue. Scale reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) are also reported. Table 7.2 reports results for an additional nine items about French language education answered only by the francophone students.

Table 7.1

Student Perceptions of Variables Related to Participation and Identification: Descriptive Statistics
(N = 152; Scale: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; 4=strongly agree*)

	Student Perceptions:	Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's Alpha
	Student Participation in School Activities	**2.68**	**.16**	**.89**
	Level 1: Respond to Requirements	**2.71**	**.15**	**.66**
1	I always respond when the teacher asks me questions during class.	3.10	.20	
2	I do all the homework I am expected to do.	2.95	.24	
3	I do (the following amount of) homework on an average night	2.84	.37	
4	I rarely daydream in my class(es).	2.68	.27	
5	I always finish my schoolwork on time.	2.62	.23	
6	Work in my class(es) is not often interrupted.	2.47	.26	

Table 7.1 (cont'd)

	Student Perceptions:	Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's Alpha
	Level 2: Class-related initiative	**2.67**	**.17**	**.77**
7	I put a lot of energy into my schoolwork.	3.02	.18	
8	I enjoy giving my opinion during class discussions.	3.01	.22	
9	I often ask questions in class.	2.77	.22	
10	I do a lot of extra reading for my own benefit.	2.71	.29	
11	I often have discussions with my teachers about things that I find interesting.	2.48	.30	
12	I often do extra schoolwork to find out more about something that interests me.	2.05	.26	
	Level 3: Extracurricular activities	**2.59**	**.36**	**.85**
13	Participating in school events (e.g., games, dances, plays) is a very important part of my life at school.	3.18	.28	
14	I attend school dances.	3.01	.56	
15	I participate in one-day special events.	2.97	.47	
16	I participate in sports events	2.81	.48	
17	I participate in other (unspecified) school activities.	2.76	.69	
18	I am a spectator at sports events	2.46	.34	
19	I am a spectator at other (non-sporting) school events.	2.17	.42	
20	I participate in other (non-sporting) school events.	2.04	.48	
21	Membership in school organizations this year:	1.90	.81	
	Level 4: Decision making	**2.72**	**.16**	**.50**
22	My teachers encourage me to decide what I want to get out of school.	3.02	.24	
23	I decide what to do for projects and assignments.	2.99	.24	
24	I make decisions about what I do in class.	2.91	.33	
25	The rules in our school are fair to students.	2.69	.33	
26	In my class(es) we vote on decisions affecting everyone.	2.68	.37	
27	I have helped to decide what the rules will be for our school.	2.01	.29	
	Identification with School	**3.00**	**.17**	**.92**
	A Sense of Belonging	**2.98**	**.17**	**.90**
28	I have made many friends in my school.	3.43	.17	
29	I have gotten to know other students in our school really well.	3.36	.18	
30	I get along with most other students in my school.	3.24	.18	
31	I get along with most of my teachers.	3.03	.23	
32	I feel that I "belong" at this school.	2.93	.25	
33	Most of my teachers make me feel comfortable in class.	2.90	.24	
34	Most of my teachers treat me the same as other students.	2.84	.25	
35	Most of my teachers are interested in me as a person.	2.79	.26	
36	Most of my teachers seem to understand me.	2.77	.24	
37	My teachers spend time just talking with me.	2.55	.30	
	Valuing	**3.01**	**.20**	**.81**
38	Everyone should get as much education as they can.	3.51	.17	
39	Good marks at school are important to me.	3.49	.19	
40	I think schoolwork is really important.	3.22	.24	
41	School spirit is very high in my school.	2.84	.42	

Table 7.1 (cont'd)

	Student Perceptions:	Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's Alpha
42	I am proud of my school.	2.81	.39	
43	I really enjoy school most of the time.	2.78	.26	
44	The most important things that happen to me usually happen at school.	2.40	.24	
Quality of Instruction		**2.91**	**.18**	**.92**
45	My teachers expect me to think hard.	3.24	.19	
46	My schoolwork is helping me prepare for life after I finish school.	3.24	.19	
47	The books and equipment I need are available to me.	3.07	.26	
48	We have the right number of quizzes, tests and exams in my courses.	3.02	.26	
49	Most of my classes are well-organized.	3.01	.22	
50	Most of my teachers go out of their way to help students.	2.96	.28	
51	The things I learn in school are useful in my life outside school.	2.95	.22	
52	Most of my teachers relate schoolwork to my future life.	2.91	.27	
53	My teachers use a lot of different activities to teach their lessons.	2.89	.29	
54	Most of my teachers are willing to spend extra time with me.	2.87	.28	
55	I like the way teachers teach in most of my classes.	2.80	.30	
56	My teachers often discuss my work with me.	2.76	.25	
57	I am constantly challenged in class.	2.67	.23	
58	I am rarely bored in class.	2.29	.29	
Family Educational Culture		**2.95**	**.18**	**.88**
59	My parents/guardians always know whether or not I am at school.	3.29	.26	
60	My parents/guardians always are willing to help me with my schoolwork.	3.24	.21	
61	My parents/guardians ensure that I have a healthy diet and enough sleep.	3.10	.23	
62	I have my own work space at home that is fairly quiet for doing homework and school projects.	3.09	.23	
63	My parents/guardians encourage me to participate in extracurricular activities or events.	3.02	.24	
64	Study aids at home (e.g., books, an encyclopedia, magazines or computer) help me do better schoolwork.	2.94	.24	
65	My parents/guardians make sure I do my homework before having free time.	2.79	.27	
66	I often discuss my schoolwork with my parents/guardians.	2.70	.27	
67	My parents/guardians usually go to parents' nights and special school events.	2.65	.33	
68	I often have conversations about major world events with my parents/guardians.	2.63	.24	
Abilities		**3.11**	**.15**	**.76**
69	I feel confident that I will be successful in school.	3.20	.18	
70	I am able to understand most of the material covered in class.	3.19	.16	
71	Comparison of my ability with other students in my class(es).	2.93	.18	

Table 7.1 (cont'd)

Student Perceptions:		Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's Alpha
Successful Performance Outcomes		**3.16**	**.17**	**.76**
72	I will graduate from high school.	3.51	.16	
73	I am doing well at school.	3.14	.20	
74	I am satisfied with my marks.	2.87	.25	

Note: Some items were rated on a 5 point "frequency" scale (see Table 6.2) and transformed to max=4 for convenience in analysis and reporting. The formula (X/5)*4 was used for this purpose.

Participation. Four levels or degrees of participation were included in the student participation variable: responding to basic requirements, taking initiative in the classroom, participating in extracurricular events, participating in school decision making for decisions affecting students. The overall rating for student participation (M = 2.68) was the lowest rating given to any of the issues about which students were asked. Of the four levels of participation, students rated participation in school decision making (M = 2.72) highest, in a virtual tie with responding to requirements (M = 2.71); extracurricular activities were rated lowest (M = 2.59).

Within the first level of student participation, responding to basic requirements, students gave the two highest ratings to always responding to teacher questions during class (M = 3.10) and doing all the homework expected (M = 2.95). Finishing schoolwork on time (M = 2.62) and uninterrupted work in class (M = 2.47) were rated lowest. When it came to taking initiative in class, the second participation level, students claimed that they put a lot of energy into their school work (M = 3.02) and enjoyed giving their opinions during class discussions (M = 3.01). Students were more likely to disagree that they often had discussions with teachers about things they found interesting (M = 2.48) or that they did extra schoolwork to find out more about something that interested them (M = 2.05). Within the third level of participation, extracurricular activities, students agreed that participating in school events was very important to their life at school (M = 3.18), rating that statement highest of all in the participation variable. Attending school dances was the activity rated highest (M = 3.01). Also rated high were participating in one-day special events (M = 2.97) and in sports events (M = 2.81). Participation in events such as

plays and musicals (M = 2.04) and membership in school organizations (M = 1.90) were ranked lowest. It is of interest that students were generally more likely to be a participant than a spectator in sports and other school events.

Identification. A second issue about which students were asked was the extent of their identification with school, as reflected in their sense of belonging to school and the value they placed on school-related goals. Both elements of identification were given relatively high overall ratings with valuing education rated slightly higher (M = 3.01) than belonging (M = 2.98). The mean for the identification variable as a whole was 3.00, indicating that students generally identified with their schools, even though the identification may not have been strong.

As might be expected, the statements that reflected a sense of belonging through their relationships with peers received the highest ratings; students indicated that they had made many friends at school (M = 3.43), had gotten to know other students in the school really well (M = 3.36), and were getting along well with most other students (M = 3.24). Students were somewhat less likely to agree that most of their teachers understood them personally (M = 2.77) or spent time just talking with them (M = 2.55).

With respect to valuing school-related goals, students agreed with the statement that everyone should get as much education as they could (M = 3.51); this statement was tied with another one ("I will graduate from high school") for highest ranking among the 74 statements on the survey. The importance of good marks at school (M = 3.49) received the third highest rating in the survey. Students also agreed that schoolwork was really important (M = 3.22). Students were not as likely to agree that school was usually the place where the most important things happened to them (M = 2.40).

Quality of Instruction. Students' perception of the quality of instruction they receive is believed to have a substantial influence on the level of their participation and performance in school. The mean rating for the fourteen statements addressing students' perception of their instruction was 2.91, indicating most agreed with the statements although agreement was not strong. Students generally agreed that their teachers expected them to think hard and that their schoolwork was helping prepare them for life after school (both with M = 3.24). Also, they reported having the

necessary books and equipment (M = 3.07), the right number of quizzes, tests and exams (M = 3.02) and well-organized classes (M = 3.01). Students were not as likely to agree that they were constantly challenged in class (M = 2.67); they were even more reluctant to agree that they were rarely bored in class (M = 2.29).

Family Educational Culture. Students' performance in school is believed to be assisted by a family educational culture which provides support for student efforts and which reinforces school-related goals. The overall mean for the ten statements related to family culture was relatively low at 2.95. Highest ratings were given to statements which indicated that parents or guardians always knew when they were in school (M = 3.29), always were willing to help with their schoolwork (M = 3.24), ensured they had a healthy diet and enough sleep (M = 3.10), and provided a fairly quiet workspace for doing homework and projects (M = 3.09). Parents' or guardians' direct contact with school, through attending parents' nights and special events, was ranked second lowest among these items (M = 2.65). And students were least in agreement that they had conversations with their parents about major world events (M = 2.63).

Ability. Three items were used to address students' perceptions of their own ability to do their schoolwork. The overall mean for these items was 3.11. Students rated confidence that they would be successful in school (M = 3.20) highest, followed closely by agreement that they were able to understand most the the material covered in class (M = 3.19).

Performance. Students generally agreed that they were successful (M = 3.16), with the highest rating given to their belief that they would graduate from high school (M = 3.51). Somewhat less certain was their belief that they were doing well (M = 3.14). Rated even lower was satisfaction with their marks (M = 2.87).

French language Identification. Students in the 15 French language pilot projects responded to an additional 8 items about issues related to French language education. Students indicated that they like going to a French school (M = 3.30), considered themselves to be both franco-Ontarian (M = 3.18) and francophone (M = 3.16) and planned to continue their education in French (M = 3.13). They were less likely to speak mostly French with friends at school (M = 2.51), although the standard deviation of 0.62 indicates considerable variation in that practice.

Consistent with their response to the first question, French students did not indicate a preference for attending English language schools (M = 1.87). Means and standard deviations for the entire set of items are provided in Table 7.2. There were too few francophone schools in the study to allow separate analysis of relationships among variables within French language schools or to include the items within the other identification categories.

Table 7.2

Student Perceptions of Issues Related to French-Language Education

(N = 15; Scale: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree;4=strongly agree)

Item	Mean	S.D.
1. I like going to a French language school.	3.30	.23
2. I consider myself to be franco-Ontarian.	3.18	.25
3. I consider myself to be francophone.	3.16	.21
4. I plan to continue my education in French after high school.	3.13	.35
5. Most of my friends are French speaking.	2.91	.34
6. I discuss issues related to being francophone with my parents and friends.	2.56	.31
7. I speak mostly French with my friends at school.	2.51	.62
8. I would prefer going to an English language school.	1.87	.25

7.3 Relationships among variables in the student participation and identification model.

Students' opinions about each of six categories of variables included in our adaptation of Finn's (1989) participation-identification model of student participation have been described separately (above). But this description does not address the relationships among these variables as they were outlined in Chapter 4, Figure 4.1. Specifically, we wanted to know (1) whether the influences on student

participation and identification predicted by the model were evident among Transition Years students, (2) whether there were other important influences not included in the model, and (3) the extent to which the variable family educational culture, in particular, was able to explain variation in student participation and identification. We used the statistical program LISREL 7 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989) to conduct path analyses in order to answer these questions.

For the purposes of the present analyses, data were aggregated to the school level. Several variations of the basic model were tested, and all modifications were based on theoretically justifiable changes aided by information emerging from the analyses. A path model judged by the researchers to best capture the causal relationships among the variables was developed through this process and will be reported here. The method used in this section (and in chapters to follow) to report the results of causal modelling strips away its technical complexity and focuses attention on what has been learned in plain language. Although this approach may offend the sensibilities of those with a passionate interest in the details of statistical analysis, such people represent a tiny fraction of the intended audience of this report. Interested readers are referred to the Technical Appendix for a more technical summary of our findings. Estimates of path coefficients, how well the model fits the data, and unexplained variation are reported there.

Figure 7.1 describes the causal relationships that were observed. The influences shown explained about two-thirds of the variation in student identification with school and close to 60% of the variation in student participation in school activities. These results are quite good given the number of schools providing student data (152). This model is different from what Finn (1989) proposed in two important ways. First, the influence of family educational culture is examined and second, the direct impact of perceived quality of instruction on students' identification with the school is estimated. Our test of the model, it should be noted, is limited by the use of student estimates of the key variables, rather than, say, independent estimates of ability, quality of instruction, and successful performance outcomes.

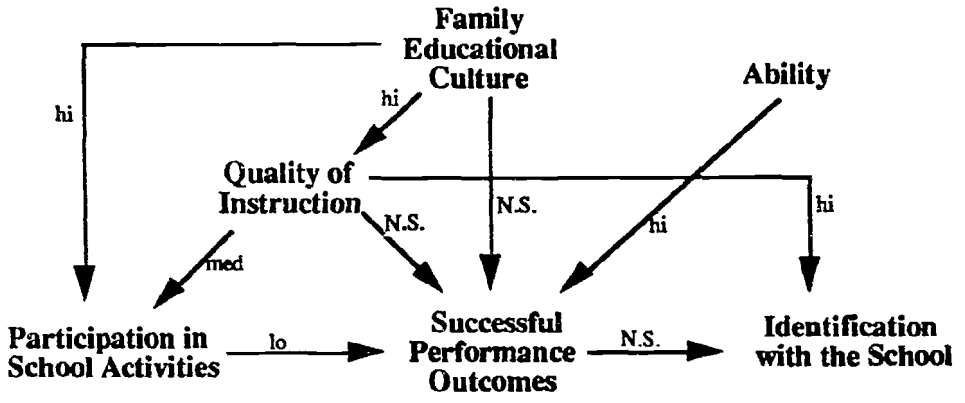

Figure 7.1: Explaining variation in student participation and identification

(Note: In Figure 7.1 the designation of a relationship as "hi" means a path coefficient of .40 or above; "med" signifies a path coefficient between .21 and .39; "lo" signifies a path coefficient of .20 or less but still statistically significant. N.S. means not statistically significant.)

Family educational culture was found to have a strong direct influence on students' participation in school activities and on their perception of the quality of instruction they received. Where educational values are held in high esteem within the home, students are more likely to show initiative in class and to participate in extracurricular activities and school-level decision making. They are also more likely to be sensitive to, and have a higher regard for instructional practices within the school, which in turn has moderate and direct effects on their level of participation in school activities. Neither family educational culture nor perceived quality of instruction were found to have a direct influence on perceived success in school. Success defined in this way was found to be explained by students' participation in school activities and, more significantly, by students' self-perceptions of their abilities. These influences explained 60% of the variation in students' perceived success in school.

Finally, although no direct connection was found between students' perceived success and the extent to which they valued school and had a sense of belonging, perceived quality of instuction was found to have a powerful and direct effect on

student identification with the school. This path of influence was not predicted by the original model. Students tended to identify more strongly with a school where the quality of instruction was viewed more favorably regardless of their own views about their level of performance in school.

One of the main advantages of the method used to analyze our data, over other alternatives, is the possibility of estimating the combined effects (both direct and indirect) of some variable on an outcome of interest - the overall "potency" or "power" of some measure. Table 7.3 shows the total effects (indirect and direct) of all other variables in the model on both level of participation and identification within the school. While perceived ability explained students' opinions about the success of their own performance, it did not determine the extent to which students valued or felt they belonged at school. Participation in school activities and perceived success were likewise unable to explain variation in students' identification with school. In this Table it is evident that the most powerful explanatory variables were family educational culture and perceived quality of instruction with the impact of family culture on student identification being indirect. These variables also directly explained students' levels of participation in school activities. We may conclude, then, that where educational values are held in high regard at home, students have more positive views about the instruction they receive at school and are likely to participate more and be more engaged by the school, regardless of their perceived level of ability or degree of success in school.

Table 7.3

The Total Effects of Student Characteristics and Views on Perceived Participation in and Identification With School

Student Characteristics and Views	Perceived Student Outcomes: Participation in School Activities	Perceived Student Outcomes: Identification with School
Ability	N/A	.05
Family Educational Culture	.70*	.47*
Quality of Instruction	.35*	.29*
Successful Performance Outcomes	N/A	.07
Participation in School Activities	N/A	.01

7.4 The Extent to Which Transition Years Initiatives Have Influenced Eleven Specific Student Outcomes

The Survey of Transition Years Conditions asked respondents to indicate, on a four-point scale, the degree to which they believed eleven student outcomes were (a) currently being achieved and (b) anticipated to be achieved as a result of Transition Years initiatives. The eleven specific outcomes represented areas of concern evident in pilot project initiatives; they were identified through a telephone survey of pilot project coordinators and a review of reports submitted to the Ministry at the end of the pilots' first year (1991-92). The goals, listed in Table 7.4, touch on students' social development, emotional development, intellectual development, and engagement. An additional four items concerned easing students' transitions and enhancing the relevance of schooling for the students' future.

Table 7.4 indicates that respondents anticipated greater achievement of all outcomes in the future than was being achieved currently (overall mean ratings 3.17 *vs.* 2.79), an understandable result given the early stages of most Transition Years initiatives. The one social development goal was tied with an ease of transition goal for the highest rating; two emotional development goals were ranked second and third. Goals were rated similarly, whether anticipated or current, although there was a shift in ranking with one emotional development goal receiving the highest rating for anticipated achievement.

Table 7.4

Current and Anticipated Outcomes for Students Related to Transition Years Pilot Project Initiatives: Descriptive Statistics

(N = 350; Scale: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; 4=strongly agree)

Perceived Student Outcomes	Current		Anticipated	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
	2.79	**.40**	**3.17**	**.46**
Emotional Development				
1. More positive attitudes by students toward school and learning.	2.83	.50	3.35	.51
2. Growth in students' positive self-concept.	2.93	.46	3.28	.49

Table 7.4 (cont'd)

Perceived Student Outcomes	Current		Anticipated	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Social Development				
3. More cooperative attitude by students toward working with one another.	2.96	.48	3.32	.49
Relevance of Education to Students' Future				
4. Greater clarity for students about their occupational and other life goals.	2.64	.51	3.10	.56
5. Greater clarity for students about their future educational aspirations.	2.70	.51	3.14	.59
Student Engagement				
6. Increased attendance in class.	2.70	.61	3.06	.60
7. Fewer dropouts.	2.67	.60	3.04	.64
Ease of Transition				
8. Less difficulty by students first entering secondary school in accommodating to the secondary program.	2.96	.54	3.32	.55
9. Less difficulty by students in making the transition from grade 9 to the specialization years.	2.82	.55	3.21	.57
Student Engagement				
10. Few discipline problems and incidences of suspensions.	2.59	.58	2.92	.62
Intellectual Development				
11. Academic success for a larger proportion of students than was the case previously.	2.75	.55	3.11	.57
Reliability of combined outcome items (Cronbach's alpha)	.928		.815	

In terms of current achievement, the four highest rated individual goals (both elementary and secondary responses) were:

- *More cooperative attitude by students toward working with one another. (M = 2.96)*
- *Less difficulty by students first entering secondary school in accommodating to the secondary program. (M = 2.96)*
- *Growth in students' postive self-concept. (M = 2.93).*
- *More positive attitudes by students toward school and learning. (M = 2.83)*

In terms of anticipated achievement, the last of these four goals was given the highest rating with the first and second goals again tied, but in second place.

The three lowest rated goals, in terms of current achievement, were:

- *Fewer dropouts (M = 2.67)*
- *Greater clarity for students about occupational and other life goals (M = 2.64)*
- *Fewer discipline problems and incidences of suspensions (M = 2.59)*

The second of these goals (related to perceived relevance of education) moved higher in the ratings for anticipated achievement and was replaced by the third student engagement goal, increased attendance in class.

Discriminant functions analysis suggested that elementary staffs perceived greater current achievement of clarity for students about their life goals and of academic success for more students than previously. They also anticipated less difficult transitions to the specialized years for future students. Secondary staffs rated two current achievements higher: less difficulty for new students in accommodating to the secondary program and more positive attitudes toward school and learning.

Comparison of French and English language staffs found that each rated two current achievements higher. French staffs perceived more positive attitudes by students toward school and growth in students' self-concept. English staffs reported greater clarity for students about life goals and increased attendance. Both groups also had significant differences in ratings of anticipated achievement. Francophones anticipated greater growth in self-concept and in attendance. Anglophones anticipated more positive attitudes toward school and learning, easier transitions and fewer discipline problems.

7.5 Summary

A large sample of students in Transition Years pilot schools were asked about their levels of school participation, identification with school, and the quality of instruction they received; they were also asked about their family's educational culture, as well as their ability and performance at school. The full significance of

students' opinions concerning these issues will not be evident until their responses are considered in relation to in-school and out-of-school conditions as well as school leadership. Chapter 9 explains variation across schools in students' responses using data about out-of-school and in-school conditions as well as school leadership. The present chapter was confined to a description of student opinion. Also described were teacher opinions about the effects of Transition Years initiatives on 11 specific student outcomes. In summary:

1. Among the six broad categories of issues about which students were asked, mean ratings were highest for students' judgements of their own performance and their own abilities. Students rated their own participation in school lowest of the six sets of issues about which they were asked.

2. Considering student opinion about those aspects of school in which they participated, lowest ratings were given to membership in school organizations and helping to decide on school rules. Highest ratings were given to the importance of participating in such school events as games, dances, and plays.

3. Considering identification with school, students attributed considerable importance to attachments with their peers; they also agreed very strongly that school, education, and good marks were important to them.

4. Students' opinions concerning the quality of instruction being received suggested that their teachers had high expectations of them and that links between school work and their lives after school were apparent to them. Students were much less inclined to agree that they were constantly challenged or rarely bored in class.

5. Among those aspects of family educational culture about which students were asked, students agreed most that their parents or guardians always knew if they were at school, were willing to help with homework, and ensured a healthy diet and adequate sleep. The weakest aspects of family educational culture which were measured were conversations about schoolwork, major world events and attendance at school events.

6. With respect to abilities and performance, students expressed most confidence about succeeding and graduating from high school.

7. Francophone students identified with their French language schools and defined themselves as francophone and franco-Ontarian. Although they sometimes used English at school with friends, they did not indicate a preference for changing to English language education.

8. Finally, in response to eleven specific student outcomes, teachers perceived that their Transition Years initiatives were having the most impact on students' attitudes toward working with one another and on easing students' transitions into secondary school programs. Teachers perceived least impact on reducing discipline problems and increasing clarity for students about occupational and other life goals.

8.
The Status of School Leadership and Conditions Within and Outside the School Likely to Influence Transition Years Initiatives

8.1 Overview

The commitment-building strategy for school restructuring used as a guide for the study identified conditions both inside and outside the school likely to influence Transition Years initiatives. Within the school, these were conditions associated with school goals, culture, teachers, programs and instruction, policies and organization, and resources. Outside the school, conditions associated with the Ministry of Education and Training, the school board and the local school community were identified. From previous research, specific conditions associated with successful change were identified within each of these 9 categories. Teachers and administrators were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed that these conditions prevailed in the context of their Transition Years initiatives. The survey of Transition Years conditions was used to collect this opinion. The same survey also asked for opinions concerning the status of school leadership: about the sources of such leadership, as well as the extent to which dimensions of practice based on a transformational model of leadership were evident.

8.2 The Status of Conditions In Schools

Table 8.1 includes the 37 in-school conditions addressed by the survey and reports the mean rating (1= strongly disagree; 4= strongly agree) and standard deviation of teachers' and administrators' responses for each condition. These conditions are presented in rank order within each category, beginning with the highest rated condition. Also reported is the scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for each category of in-school conditions.

Table 8.1

The Status of In-School Conditions Across Transition Years Pilot Projects: Descriptive Statistics

(N = 350; Scale: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree)

In-School Conditions	Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's Alpha
A. School Goals	**2.80**	**.47**	**.88**
1 Teachers in our school participate in the process of developing school goals for the Transition Years.	3.00	.63	
2 Teachers work toward consensus in establishing priorities for our school goals for the Transition Years.	2.88	.57	
3 Discussion about school goals and means of achieving them is a regular part of staff meetings and/or inservice sessions in our school.	2.87	.61	
4 Teachers in our school work toward the same Transition Years goals.	2.81	.60	
5 Teachers engage in problem solving to generate our school goals for the Transition Years.	2.70	.59	
6 We regularly evaluate our progress toward achievement of school goals for the Transition Years.	2.57	.59	
B. School Culture	**2.81**	**.38**	**.68**
7 I have frequent conversations about teaching practices with colleagues in this school.	3.24	.50	
8 Strong, positive relationships between staff and school administration facilitate implementation of Transition Years initiatives.	3.18	.58	
9 Most teachers at this school share a similar set of values, beliefs and attitudes related to teaching and learning.	2.85	.71	
10 I share my professional expertise by demonstrating new teaching practices for colleagues.	2.79	.60	
11 I frequently work with colleague(s) in this school to prepare unit outlines and/or instructional materials.	2.72	.60	
12 We observe each other teaching and then discuss our observations as a means of gaining a better understanding of our own teaching strategies.	2.06	.56	
C. Teachers	**3.31**	**.35**	**.70**
13 I am satisfied with my job.	3.43	.53	
14 I engage in ongoing, professional development for myself.	3.42	.42	
15 I frequently implement new programs or new teaching strategies.	3.24	.46	
16 I am committed to the goals of the Transition Years initiatives.	3.24	.54	
17 I am motivated to implement the Transition Years initiatives.	3.24	.58	
D. Program and Instruction	**2.99**	**.35**	**.80**
18 Instruction is being carefully planned to provide diverse activities and experiences for our students.	3.15	.50	
19 Teachers in this school use a wide variety of assessment methods to provide authentic assessment of student achievement.	3.12	.50	
20 Teachers in our school are becoming increasingly skilled in the use of a large repertoire of instructional strategies.	3.06	.53	
21 Instructional practices in our school are being modified to be compatible with the goals and priorities for the Transition Years initiative.	3.06	.58	
22 Teachers use the results of student evaluation to plan future instruction.	3.03	.45	
23 Prior to the current Transition Years initiatives this school's curriculum was clearly written and well understood by most staff.	2.88	.60	

Table 8.1 (cont'd)

In-School Conditions		Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's Alpha
24	We are developing a good match between our assessment strategies and our curriculum objectives.	2.86	.47	
25	Prior to the current Transition Years initiative this school's curriculum was developed by teachers working in collaboration.	2.72	.65	
E.	**School Policies and Organization**	**2.94**	**.41**	**.77**
26	Assignment of students to classes is based primarily on program and student needs (i.e., rather than teacher or administrator preferences).	3.16	.61	
27	Our school provides opportunities for professional development through informal working relations within this school.	3.12	.50	
28	Our school provides formal professional development opportunities.	3.10	.48	
29	Teacher evaluation/supervision practices reflect our school goals and priorities.	3.01	.55	
30	Personnel selection and hiring criteria reflect our general school goals and priorities.	2.92	.66	
31	Our timetables/schedules facilitate planning together with colleagues.	2.36	.70	
F.	**Resources**	**2.77**	**.40**	**.71**
32	This school provides access to professional staff with expertise in helping us improve programs for our students.	3.12	.50	
33	This school has adequate amounts of such resources as texts, curriculum materials and teaching aids.	2.83	.64	
34	Financial resources are available when needed to facilitate implementation of Transition Years initiatives.	2.79	.61	
35	The school provides adequate release time for planning and/or professional development.	2.72	.63	
36	Appropriate support personnel (e.g., aids, substitutes, etc.) are available to assist in implementation of our programs.	2.70	.63	
37	The school's physical facilities enhance achievement of Transition Years' goals and priorities.	2.47	.72	

Across the six categories of in-school conditions, overall mean ratings were highest for teachers (M = 3.31), followed by programs and instruction (M = 2.99), policies and organization (M = 2.94), culture (M = 2.81), goals (M = 2.80), and, finally, resources (M = 2.77). The eight highest rated (of 111) specific conditions (M > 3.15) across all the categories were:

- *I am satisfied with my job. (M = 3.43)*
- *I engage in ongoing professional development for myself. (M = 3.42)*
- *I frequently implement new programs or new teaching strategies. (M = 3.24)*
- *I am committed to the goals of the Transition Years initiatives. (M = 3.24)*
- *I am motivated to implement the Transition Years initiatives. (M = 3.24)*

- *I have frequent conversations about teaching practices with colleagues in the school (M = 3.24)*
- *Strong, positive relationships between staff and school administration facilitate implementation of Transition Years initiatives. (M = 3.18)*
- *Assignments of students to class is based primarily on program and student needs. (M = 3.16)*

The first five of these statements are included in the category of conditions called teacher. Agreement with these statements indicates that staffs in the pilot project schools were committed to school improvement within the context of the Transition Years initiative.

Statements with which respondents largely disagreed ($M < 2.50$) were as follows:

- *The school's physical facilities enhance achievement of Transition Years' goals and priorities. (M = 2.47)*
- *Our timetables/schedules facilitate planning together with colleagues. (M = 2.36)*
- *We observe each other teaching and then discuss our observations as a means of gaining a better understanding of our own teaching strategies. (M = 2.06)*

Results of discriminant function analysis suggested several differences in patterns of response to in-school conditions by elementary and secondary staffs. Elementary staffs reported more agreement that school goals and means of achieving them were discussed at staff meetings and inservice sessions as well as that teachers were working toward the same Transition Years goals. Secondary staffs reported more teacher participation in developing goals and in establishing priorities for the Transition Years.

Elementary staffs agreed that stronger administrator-staff relationship facilitated implementation of Transition Years initiatives. Secondary staffs reported more conversations about teaching practices with colleagues; they also reported more observation of teacher colleagues (although not a common practice in many schools). Secondary teachers reported greater job satisfaction than their elementary colleagues. Among the specific conditions related to programs and instruction, elementary teachers were more likely to say they were becoming increasingly skilled in using a large repertoire of strategies. Secondary staffs reported more modification of instructional practices for compatibility with goals and priorities for their

Transition Years initiative. Secondary respondents also indicated a school curriculum clearly written and understood by staff prior to current Transition Years' initiatives.

With respect to policy and organization conditions, elementary schools were more likely to have teacher evaluation/supervision practices reflecting school goals and priorities. Secondary staffs reported policies fostering collaboration through timetables that facilitated joint planning and opportunities for professional development through informal working relations. These staffs also agreed more strongly that student class assignments were based on program and student needs versus teacher or administration preferences. Finally, in the area of resources, elementary staffs reported more access to professional staff and more adequate release time for planning and professional development. The only specific Resource condition rated higher by secondary respondents was greater availability of financial resources when needed for Transition Years implementation.

A second discriminant function analysis was used to determine differences in responses for French language and English language staff members. French staffs were somewhat likely ($p<.05$) to give higher ratings to statements related to culture. Specific statements rated higher reflected positive relationships between staff and school administration, frequent conversations about teaching practices, sharing professional expertise and observation of colleagues' classroom practice. English staffs were likely to rate statements in the teacher and policy and organization categories higher, including motivation to implement Transition Years initiatives, ongoing professional development and opportunities for professional development through informal working relations.

Three statements related to in-school conditions specific to French language schools were rated only by francophone respondents; ratings for each statements were in the "disagree to agree" range. They were most likely to agree that the areas of focus for the Transition Years took into consideration the needs of teachers working in minority settings (M = 2.84) but somewhat less likely to agree that French resources were accessible in their school (M = 2.75), or that constraints specific to French schools were affecting implementation (M = 2.69).

8.3 The Status of Conditions Outside Schools

Table 8.2 identifies specific conditions related to the Ministry, school board and community. Based on teachers' and administrators' responses, the table ranks the specific conditions within categories and reports means and standard deviations for each condition.

Table 8.2

The Status of Out-of-School Conditions Across Transition Years Pilot Projects: Descriptive Statistics
(N = 350; Scale: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; 4=strongly agree)

Out-of-School Conditions		Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's Alpha
A.	**Ministry**	**2.79**	**.45**	**.45**
1	Ministry funding is helpful for implementing Transition Years initiatives within our school.	3.17	.68	
2	Ministry guidelines and support documents are a helpful resource for implementing Transition Years initiatives.	2.72	.61	
3	Ministry personnel are available to advise in planning and implementation of Transition Years initiatives.	2.43	.62	
B.	**School System**	**3.00**	**.46**	**.84**
4	School-based people provide significant input into our board's Transition Years pilot projects.	3.32	.58	
5	Our board facilitates opportunities for elementary and secondary teachers to work jointly on Transition Years initiatives.	3.21	.63	
6	Our board provides staff development opportunities that are useful to our school in implementing Transition Years initiatives.	3.02	.62	
7	Board-level initiatives related to the Transition Years support our efforts to implement changes within our school.	3.01	.57	
8	Board-level personnel provide assistance in planning and implementing Transition Years initiatives within our school.	2.88	.70	
9	Our board provides additional funds to support implementation of Transition Years initiatives.	2.84	.71	
10	Our board has developed a clearly defined mission or vision which is helpful in determining school priorities for the Transition Years.	2.75	.66	
C.	**School community**	**2.97**	**.38**	**.72**
11	Our school encourages parents to drop into the school frequently to discuss their childrens' programs.	3.39	.51	
12	This school makes effective use of community resources (i.e., human and material) in providing the best possible programs for our students.	3.14	.53	
13	Our school assists some parents in providing a more positive educational climate for children in their home.	3.06	.55	
14	The community served by this school generally supports our Transition Years initiatives.	2.87	.53	
15	Communication between our school and our community about Transition Years initiatives is of a high quality.	2.40	.65	

Overall mean ratings were highest for statements about the school system (M = 3.00) and school community conditions (M = 2.97) followed by Ministry conditions (M = 2.79). Among the highest rated of these specific conditions (ratings above 3.10) were:

- *Our school encourages parents to drop into the school frequently to discuss their childrens' programs (M = 3.39)*
- *School-based people provide significant input into our board's Transition Years pilot project (M = 3.32)*
- *Our board facilitates opportunities for elementary and secondary teachers to work jointly on Transition Years initiatives (M = 3.21)*
- *Ministry funding is helpful for implementing Transition Years initiatives within our school (M = 3.17)*
- *This school makes effective use of community resources in providing the best possible programs for our students (M = 3.14)*

Respondents largely disagreed (M < 2.5) with the following two statements:

- *Ministry personnel are available to advise in planning and implementation of Transition Years initiatives (M = 2.43)*
- *Communications between our school and our community about Transition Years initiatives is of a high quality (M = 2.40)*

Discriminant function analysis identified significant differences in response patterns between elementary and secondary schools for seven specific conditions. Elementary staffs were more likely to perceive Ministry guidelines and support documents as helpful. They were also more likely to agree that their board provided useful staff development related to Transition Years initiatives and facilitated cross-panel, joint work on these initiatives. Elementary staffs also were more likely to agree that their schools encouraged parents to drop into the school and assisted parents in providing a more positive educational climate for their children at home. Secondary schools reported more effective use of community resources in school programs. These response patterns are consistent with patterns reported in the discussion of Transition Years practices in the previous chapter. Although rated

low by both groups, secondary schools were more optimistic about the quality of communication between the school and community.

Discriminant function analysis based on language of instruction found that conditions related to the Ministry tended to be rated higher by French language staffs and conditions related to school community were rated higher by English staffs. In particular, francophones reported greater availability of Ministry personnel for advice related to Transition Years. Anglophones rated higher three specific conditions (items 11, 13 and 14) reflecting their relationship with their local community.

8.4 The Status of School Leadership

Sources

Survey respondents were asked, "Who within your school, is providing leadership for implementing the Transition Years initiative?" Eight options were provided with instructions that respondents could pick as many options as they wished. Table 8.3 provides the overall frequency of responses as well as the frequency of responses for elementary and secondary schools considered separately; this table uses the school as the unit of analysis.

Table 8.3

Sources of Leadership for Implementing Transition Years Initiatives: School Responses

Leadership Sources:	Total (N = 350*) %	Elementary (N =218) %	Secondary (N = 131) %
The Principal	84	81	86
Some teachers share leadership on an informal basis	64	59	73
A committee of teachers set up especially to coordinate Transition Years initiatives	60	47	81
A committee of administrators and teachers which has ongoing leadership responsibilities in a number of areas	57	45	76
The Vice Principal	53	43	70
The school administration team of principal and vice principal(s)	47	35	66
Other (specified by respondent)	35	26	50
No one in particular is taking a leadership role.	18	17	20

* One intermediate school was dropped from the elementary/secondary breakdown.

Principals were perceived to be a source of leadership by staffs in a large majority of schools. Slightly more secondary than elementary schools selected this option. Informal teacher leadership followed closely by a teacher committee established to coordinate Transition Years initiatives were ranked second and third. A comparison of elementary and secondary school staffs indicates the same rank order for selection of sources, with the exception of second and third choices. However, leadership within secondary schools was perceived to be much more dispersed than was the case in elementary schools. The widest discrepancy in perceived source was the special teacher committee (School Improvement Team) which was created to coordinate the Transition Years Initiative, a source of leadership reported in 81% of secondary schools but only 47% of elementary schools. All sources of leadership except "no one" were perceived to exist in a majority of secondary schools; only principals and informal leaders were selected in the majority of elementary schools.

Although the overall pattern of leadership sources suggests more traditional leadership practices with a dominant principal supported by informal teacher leaders, there are indications that teacher leadership is a factor in secondary schools as well as in almost half of the elementary schools. A surprising finding was the 18% of schools in which some respondents reported that "no one was taking leadership." Further analysis of those responses indicated that in some cases that selection (paradoxically) was combined with other choices and that in only 2% of the schools was "no one" the only option selected. The significance of the other 16% may be the possibility that in a significant minority of schools the source of leadership for Transition Years was a matter of dispute within the staff or not clearly demonstrated. This led us to analyze sources of leadership data at the individual level, as well.

Table 8.4 reports sources of leadership using individual responses rather than responses aggregated to the school level. Does this make any difference? Comparing Tables 8.3 and 8.4 indicates that a considerably smaller proportion of individuals than schools identify any of the alternatives as a source of leadership. There is also a tendency for a substantially larger proportion of elementary teachers to identify principals as a source of leadership and substantially fewer secondary teachers to identify either the vice principals, the administration team or no one in particular as a source of leadership. These results paint a picture of secondary school

- core curriculum (19%);
- curriculum integration (19%).

Least variation (16%) was explained by the model with respect to school organization.

Because measurement error is always assumed to account for some portion of unexplained variation, no model will explain 100% of variation. In comparison with typical educational research results and expectations, we consider the amount of variation in implementation of Transition Years practices explained by the model in Figure 9.1 to be worthwhile, given the number of schools in the sample and the large number of potential influences on Transition Years practices (as a minimum, these data indicate how much variation is explained by those conditions most frequently recommended for attention in school change efforts). This, then, leads us to ask about the significance, strength, and explanatory power of each of the categories, as they are related in the model, for each of the seven Transition Years practices. Note, as in Chapter 7, on the simplified causal models which follow, the designation of a relationship as "hi" means a path coefficient of .40 or above; "med" signifies a path coefficient between .21 and .39; "lo" signifies a path coefficient of .20 or less but still statistically significant. N.S. means not statistically significant.

Out-of-school conditions have a direct influence on school leadership, in-school conditions, and educational practices. Beginning with school leadership, results indicated a strong and significant influence by out-of-school conditions no matter which of the seven educational practices was considered. Path coefficients ranged from .53 to .62. Although this relationship was strong, it explained only between 28% and 39% of variation in school leadership. Out-of-school conditions also had a consistently significant influence on in-school conditions: the influence was not as strong, however, with regression coefficients ranging from .32 to .41. The direct influence of out-of-school conditions was significant for only three of the seven Transition Years practices: these included school organization (.24), teacher inservice (.31), and school-community relations (.31).

Figure 9.1 also proposes a direct influence of school leadership on in-school conditions and educational practices. This influence was consistently significant in the case of in-school conditions (path coefficients ranged from .51 to .61). The direct

leadership as considerably more distributed, teacher-dependent, and non-hierarchical than the picture painted by data aggregated to the school level. It also suggests that considerable variability within schools exists concerning perceptions about sources of leadership.

Table 8.4

Sources of Leadership for Implementing Transition Years Initiatives: Individual Responses

Leadership Sources:	Total (N = 1580) %	Elementary (N =542) %	Secondary (N = 1038) %
The Principal	61	72	55
A committee of teachers set up especially to coordinate Transition Years initiatives	47	34	55
A committee of administrators and teachers which has ongoing leadership responsibilities in a number of areas	43	33	48
The Vice Principal	39	33	43
Some teachers share leadership on an informal basis	33	41	29
The school administration team of principal and vice principal(s)	28	25	29
Other (specified by respondent)	15	15	15
No one in particular is taking a leadership role.	5	9	4

Status of Leadership Practices

Table 8.5 outlines the 28 items used to measure levels of agreement about the status of seven categories of leadership practices: six transformational and one transactional (contingent reward). The mean rating (1= strongly disagree, 4= strongly agree), standard deviation, and scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) are reported for each category. All scale reliabilities reached acceptable levels. Mean ratings and standard deviations are also reported for each item within categories of leadership practices.

Table 8.5

The Status of Leadership Practices in Transition Years Pilot Projects: Descriptive Statistics

(N = 350; Scale: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; 4=strongly agree)

Leadership Practices	Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's Alpha
I. Transformational Leadership	**3.01**	**.43**	
A. Provides vision or inspiration	**2.99**	**.48**	**.87**
1 Has both the capacity and judgement to overcome most obstacles.	3.24	.52	
2 Makes us feel and act like leaders.	3.08	.56	
3 Commands respect from everyone in the school.	3.00	.64	
4 Gives us a sense of overall purpose for the Transition Years.	2.89	.56	
5 Excites us with visions of what we may be able to accomplish if we work together on the Transition Years.	2.75	.64	
B. Models behavior	**2.99**	**.57**	**.91**
6 Symbolizes success and accomplishment within our profession.	3.02	.60	
7 Provides good models for us to follow.	2.99	.59	
8 Leads by 'doing' rather than simply by 'telling'.	2.95	.68	
C. Fosters Commitment to Group Goals	**2.92**	**.47**	**.89**
9 Provides for our participation in the process of developing school goals for the Transition Years.	3.07	.54	
10 Encourages teachers to work toward the same goals for the Transition Years.	3.06	.54	
11 Encourages us regularly to evaluate our progress toward achievement of school goals for the Transition Years.	2.86	.52	
12 Uses problem solving with staff to generate school goals for the Transition Years.	2.82	.61	
13 Works toward whole staff consensus in establishing priorities for school goals for the Transition Years.	2.81	.61	
D. Provides individual support	**3.12**	**.43**	**.86**
14 Treats me as an individual with unique needs and expertise.	3.30	.53	
15 Takes my opinion into consideration when initiating actions that affect my work.	3.25	.49	
16 Behaves in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs.	3.15	.55	
17 Provides the necessary resources to support my participation in Transition Years initiatives.	3.05	.54	
18 Provides for extended training to develop my knowledge and skills relevant to the Transition Years.	2.89	.59	
E. Provides intellectual stimulation	**2.98**	**.48**	**.83**
19 Provides information that helps me think of ways to implement Transition Years initiatives.	3.00	.54	
20 Stimulates me to think about what I am doing for my Transition Years students.	2.99	.58	
21 Challenges me to reexamine some basic assumptions I have about my work with Transition Years students.	2.94	.58	

Table 8.5 (cont'd)

Leadership Practices	Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's Alpha
F. Holds high performance expectations	**3.10**	**.48**	**.85**
22 Shows us that there are high expectations for us as professionals.	3.23	.52	
23 insists on only the best performance from us.	3.05	.57	
24 Will not settle for second best in performance of our work.	3.02	.55	
II.Transactional Leadership			
A. Contingent Reward	**2.94**	**.47**	**.82**
25 Pays me personal compliments when I do outstanding work.	3.14	.54	
26 Frequently acknowledges my good performance.	3.01	.60	
27 Provides public recognition when my work is especially good.	2.94	.57	
28 Assures me that I can get what I personally want in exchange for my efforts.	2.62	.59	

Based on the mean ratings of each leadership category, results indicate highest levels of agreement with the provision of individual support (M = 3.12), followed closely by high performance expectations (M = 3.10). The remaining categories of leadership, in order of level of agreement, were provision of vision/inspiration and modelling behavior (both with M = 2.99), provision of intellectual stimulation (M = 2.98), provision of reward contingent on performance (M = 2.94), and fostering commitment to group goals (M = 2.92). The high ratings, all close to "agreement" (i.e., 3.0) were for all the transformational categories and the one transactional category that is often related to provision of individual support.

The highest rated individual items (M > 3.10) were:

- *Treats me as an individual with unique needs and expertise (M = 3.30)*
- *Takes my opinion into consideration when initiating actions that affect my work (M = 3.25)*
- *Has capacity and judgement to overcome most obstacles (M = 3.24)*
- *Shows us that there are high expectations for us a professionals (M = 3.23)*
- *Behaves in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs (M = 3.15)*
- *Pays me personal compliments when I do outstanding work (M = 3.14)*

Three of these statements, including the two with the highest rating, were part of the category, providing individual support, and the lowest rated item was from the transactional leadership category, contingent reward.

The five lowest rated individual leadership items ($M<2.87$) were:

- *Assures me that I can get what I personally want in exchange for my efforts ($M = 2.62$);*
- *Excites us with visions of what we may be able to accomplish if we work together on the Transition Years ($M = 2.75$);*
- *Works toward whole staff consensus in establishing priorities for school goals for the Transition Years ($M = 2.81$);*
- *Uses problem solving with staff to generate school goals for the Transition Years ($M = 2.82$);*
- *Encourages us regularly to evaluate our progress toward achievement of school goals for the Transition Years ($M = 2.86$).*

The last three of these items correspond to fostering commitment to group goals category. The first two were from the provision of vision and contingent reward categories, respectively.

The discriminant function analysis used to examine elementary and secondary response patterns identified differences in the extent of agreement on categories of leadership practices within schools. Provision of individual support and modelling behavior were rated significantly higher in elementary schools. Specific practices were being treated as unique individuals, having one's opinion taken into consideration, being given opportunities to develop relevant knowledge and skills, and symbolizing professional success and accomplishment.

Provision of intellectual stimulation was the one category of leadership practice rated significantly higher by secondary school staffs; two specific practices were the provision of information that helped teachers think of ways to implement the initiative and stimulating reflection on what the teachers were doing for Transition Years students. Seven other specific practices, spread across five categories, were also rated differently: four rated higher by elementary and three by secondary respondents.

When responses from French language and English language schools were compared, French staffs rated provision of vision/inspiration higher, whereas

English staffs gave higher ratings to provision of support, holding high performance expectations and provision of intellectual stimulation. There were no significant differences in the ratings for fostering group goals, modelling behavior, or provision of contingent reward. At the level of specific leadership practices, six were rated higher by French staffs and nine by English staffs.

8.5 Summary

The commitment-building strategy for school restructuring, used as a framework for this study, identifies a number of conditions inside and outside the school as important in accounting for the success of restructuring efforts; school leadership is included in the strategy, as well. This chapter described the perceptions of staffs, in Transition Years pilot sites, concerning the status or favorableness of such conditions to their Transition Years initiatives. Results reported in this chapter are summarized below.

1. With respect to the status of *conditions in schools* likely to influence the success of Transition Years initiatives:

   - staffs indicated high levels of job satisfaction and general commitment to both personal professional development and the general purposes and means associated with their schools' Transition Years initiatives;

   - staffs expressed dissatisfaction with the physical facilities and opportunities for collaborative planning within their schools in support of their Transition Years initiatives;

   - elementary and secondary schools provided subtly, but importantly different environments within which to implement Transition Years initiatives. But there was no clear, overall advantage in either environment concerning the probability of successful Transition Years implementation;

2. Concerning the status of *conditions outside of the school* likely to influence the success of Transition Years initiatives:

- across the three categories of out-of-school conditions, the status of school board conditions was perceived to be most favorable, followed by the status of Community and, finally, Ministry conditions;

- among specific school board conditions, staffs were in most agreement that opportunities had been provided for teachers to work together on Transition Years initiatives;

- among specific community conditions, there was most agreement about the quality of informal relations with parents and the productive use of community resources. The quality of communications between school and community about Transition Years initiatives was considered to be problematic. This was especially true for elementary schools;

- the specific Ministry condition about which agreement was highest was adequate funding of pilot projects. But Ministry personnel were perceived to be largely unavailable for advice on planning and implementing Transition Years initiatives;

- elementary and secondary school staffs had different perceptions about the status of a number of out-of-school conditions. Elementary staffs viewed more favorably Ministry documents, board staff development opportunities, cross panel work, and relations with parents. Secondary staffs viewed the use of community resources more favorably.

3. With respect to the status of school leadership in Transition Years sites:

- formal school leaders were perceived to be the dominant source of leadership in the pilot sites along with the informal leadership provided by some teachers and committees set up specifically for Transition Years leadership. Secondary schools displayed more distributed, teacher-dependent, and non-hierarchical forms of leadership as compared with elementary schools.

- respondents were in most agreement about their leaders' provision of individual support. But this was more likely to be "soft support" - consideration, thoughtfulness - as distinct from such "hard support" as money

and training. Respondents agreed least that their leaders were fostering commitment to group goals.

9.
Explaining Variations in the Progress Being Made in Transition Years Pilot Sites

9.1 Overview

Results reported in previous chapters have been descriptive in nature. Questions have been answered, by this point, about the status of school leadership and conditions in and out of the school thought to have an influence on Transition Years initiatives in pilot sites. Also answered by this point are questions about the status of several different outcomes of interest to those involved in pilot sites - implementation of Transition Years practices, perceived student outcomes, and student participation in school. These were the easy questions to answer.

In this chapter, we take up harder questions, questions not about status, but about relationships: What accounts for the outcomes that have been described? Why do some schools appear to be further ahead than others in relation to some kinds of outcomes? Does school leadership actually make much difference? Which conditions in and out of school seem to help most with Transition Years initiatives?

To answer these questions, we carried out a series of path analyses using evidence from schools which provided a complete set of data (see Chapter 5 for a description of the analysis). Separate sets of analyses were conducted for each of the three types of outcomes that have been measured. School leadership and conditions within and outside the school were treated as independent variables (or causes). Path analysis identified the strength of the relationship between each of these variables or causes and each set of outcomes: it also indicated what proportion of the variation in each set of outcomes was explained by these independent variables. Similar analyses were conducted to clarify the causes and consequences of school leadership.

The next section of this chapter explains variations across schools in the implementation of Transition Years practices. Sections 9.3 and 9.4 explain variation

in perceived student outcomes and student participation in school. Section 9.5 examines the effect of and influences on school leadership.

9.2 Explaining Variation In The Implementation of Transition Years Practices

Transition Years practices, the implementation of which were a focus of this study, were of seven types:

- Student assessment, recording and reporting practices;
- Curriculum integration;
- Core Curriculum;
- School organization;
- Student support services;
- Teacher inservice;
- School/community relations.

Pilot sites varied considerably in the choice of such practices on which to focus their efforts. And, as Chapter 6 indicated, sites also varied in the extent to which those chosen Transition Years practices were implemented. How can this latter source of variation be explained? What accounts for more fully implemented practices in some sites than in others?

To address these questions each of the seven categories of educational practices examined in Chapter 6 were considered to be outcome or dependent variables. Our analysis then aimed to discover the relative contribution, to each of those outcomes, of school leadership, out-of-school, and in-school conditions. We asked, for example: Do conditions in the school system have a significant impact on the implementation of core curriculum? Which practices are most influenced by school system conditions? How does the influence of school system conditions compare to the influence of Ministry conditions?

The framework described in Chapter 4 (Figure 4.2) was used to guide model development. A series of 21 causal models were developed to answer questions of this sort, three models concerned with each of the seven categories of educational practices (see the Technical Appendix). Of the three sets of models, the first set tested relationships among the categories of conditions. The second set of models examined relationships among in-school conditions and their contribution to

implementation of educational practices. The three categories of out-of-school conditions (Ministry, School System, Community) was the focus of the third set of models. Each of these three sets of models, including all path coefficients, estimates of unexplained variation and indications of how well the models fit the data, are included in the Technical Appendix. As in Chapter 7, we report findings in plain language.

Figure 9.1 represents the simplest type of model that was developed. It describes only the relationships among categories of conditions. A version of this model was tested for each of the seven Transition Years practices. The combined contribution of out-of-school conditions, in-school conditions and school leadership explained between 16 and 42 percent of the variation in the extent of implementation of Transition Years practices. Practices for which the model explained most variation included:

- teacher inservice (42% of variation); and
- school-community relations (34% of variation).

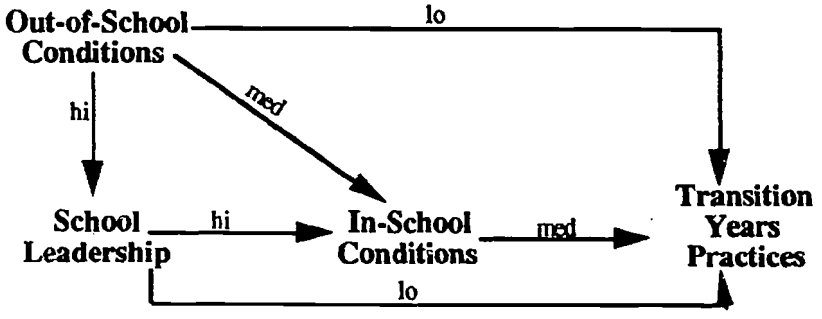

Figure 9.1: Explaining variation in education practices: The contribution of three categories
(N = 285)

The model explained a moderate amount of variation with respect to four educational practices:

- student support services (23%);
- student assessment (19%);

effects of school leadership were significant on only two educational practices - teacher inservice (.30) and school-community relations (.19). Out-of-school conditions and school leadership together explain between 64% and 71% of the variation in in-school conditions.

Finally, Figure 9.1 indicates a direct influence of in-school processes on Transition Years practices. This influence was significant and fairly strong in the cases of student assessment (.36), student support services (.42), and core curriculum (.29).

Table 9.1 summarizes the total effects (direct and indirect - see Chapter 7) of each out-of-school condition, in-school condition, and school leadership on the implementation of each category of Transition Years practices. Numbers in the cells are regression coefficients and the asterisks identify statistically significant coefficients. These results are consequential in three respects:

Table 9.1

The Total Effects of Out-of-School Conditions, In-School Conditions and School Leadership on Implementation of Each of the Transition Years Practices

			Transition Years Practices					
Conditions & Leadership	*Integration*	*Organization*	*School Community*	*Teacher Inservice*	*Core Curr.*	*Student Asses.*	*Support Services*	*No Practices Influenced*
Ministry	.14	.15*	.24*	.14*	.16*	.17*	.10	5
Board	.06	-.04	.01	.21*	.02	.04	.02	1
Community	.24*	.36*	.44*	.36*	.21*	.23*	.38*	7
Leader	.24*	.13*	.23*	.35*	.29*	.13	.14*	6
Goals	.10	-.01	.06	.01	.12	.15*	.14*	2
Culture	.08	.04	.03	.02	.06	.14*	.07	1
Teachers	.12	.18*	-.01	.05	.03	.27*	-.01	2
Program	.11	-.04	.10	.004	.21*	.18*	.23*	3
Policy	.16*	.02	-.05	.04	.04	-.02	.00	1
Resources	.05	-.02	.03	.003	.07	.06	.10	0
# of Variables Influencing Implementation	3	4	3	4	4	6	4	

- As the far right column of Table 9.1 indicates, the same three sets of conditions have a significant positive influence on the implementation of virtually all categories of Transition Years practices: the community (more precisely, teachers' perceptions of the extent of support or opposition from parents and the wider community for Transition Years directions), school leadership, and the Ministry of Education (specifically, the extent to which school staffs value Ministry efforts to explain the Transition Years policy, and the perceived adequacy of curriculum resources, money, personnel and other resources provided by the Ministry).

- Programs and instruction (the extent to which staff perceive the Transition Years to be consistent with their own beliefs and priorities) was a significant influence on the implementation of three categories of Transition Years practices.

- As the bottom row of Table 9.1 indicates, the implementation of most Transition Years practices is influenced by only three or four of ten possible sets of conditions. Student assessment practices stand alone as the object of broad influence.

In-school conditions are of immediate interest to school staffs because they are the stuff of their daily lives and because they are more readily controlled by the staff. For these reasons, we examine the nature and strength of the relationships which exist specifically among in-school conditions. Our previous research suggested that such relationships were not self-evident; rather they were similar to the relationships depicted in Figure 9.2. Only three in-school conditions have significant direct effects on Transition Years practices. In each case, these effects are modest (lo):

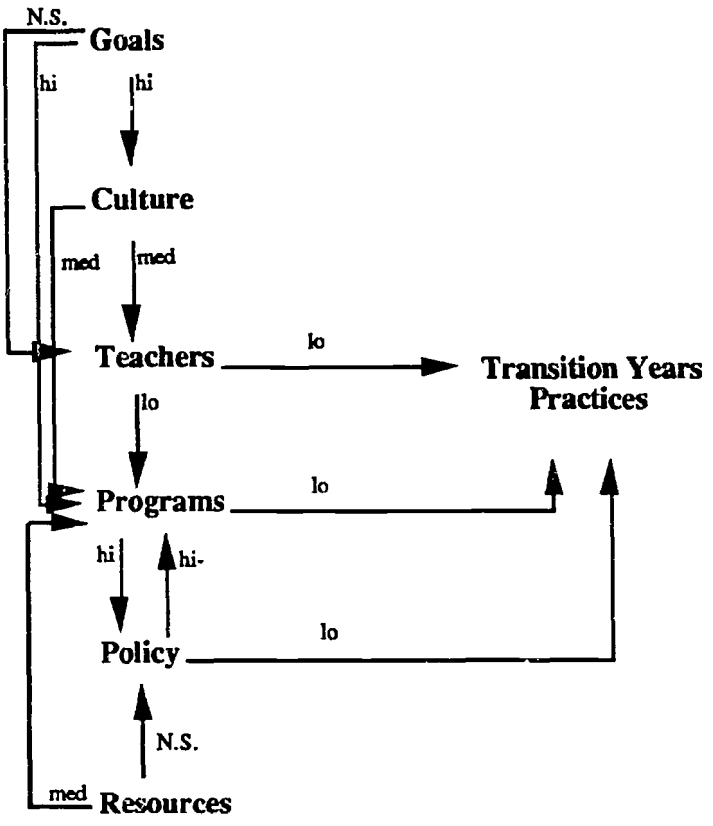

Figure 9.2: Relationships among in-school conditions and between in-school conditions and Transition Years practices
(N = 285)

- Policy and organization (the extent to which staff perceive school policies and organization to support Transition Years implementation) had a significant direct effect on the implementation of curriculum integration;

- Programs and instruction (compatibility with teachers' beliefs and priorities) had a significant direct effect on the implementation of student assessment practices and student support services;

- Teachers (their beliefs about involvement in decisions and commitment to Transition Years initiatives) had a significant direct effect on student assessment practices and on school organization.

The remaining in-school conditions effect the implementation of the seven Transition Years practices indirectly, in the following ways:

- Goals (extent to which staff perceive Transition Years goals to be clear and compatible with their own and their school's goals) had uniformly significant and strong effects on school culture (path coefficients ranging from .40 to .51) and on programs and instruction (.47 to .65);

- Culture (the degree to which staff perceive themselves to be collaborating to implement Transition Years initiatives) had uniformly significant, but more moderate effects on teachers' beliefs (.30 to .41): its effects on programs and instruction (.19 to .42) were mixed - significant in the case of four categories of Transition Years practices, but not significant in the case of three;

- The effects of teachers' beliefs on programs and instruction were weak, but significant in causal models concerned with three of the seven categories of Transition Years practices (.14 to .22);

- Programs and instruction had strong and positive effects on policy and organization (.53 to .66). Also examined was the reciprocal effect of policy on program; we found strong, negative effects in models examining effects on four categories of Transition Years practices (the most attractive interpretation of these data is that policies should be made to support program and instruction decisions, rather than the other way around);

- Resources (perceived adequacy of financial and material resources available for Transition Years implementation) had only weak and non-significant relationships with policy and organization (.02 to .08). It had a strong and significant effect on program (.32 to .46).

9.3 Explaining Variation in Perceived Student Outcomes

As explained in Chapters 4 and 7, teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed that a list of eleven specific objectives were being fostered by their Transition Years initiatives; they were asked their opinion about the current state of affairs as well as what they anticipated would be the case later on. There was considerable variation across pilot sites in response to these outcomes. This section offers an explanation for such variation using suitable modifications of the same models and types of data analysis described in the previous section. More specifically, Figure 9.3 depicts anticipated student outcomes as a set of variables which might mediate or influence teachers' opinions concerning current student outcomes in a manner similar to the three other categories with which readers will be familiar by now.

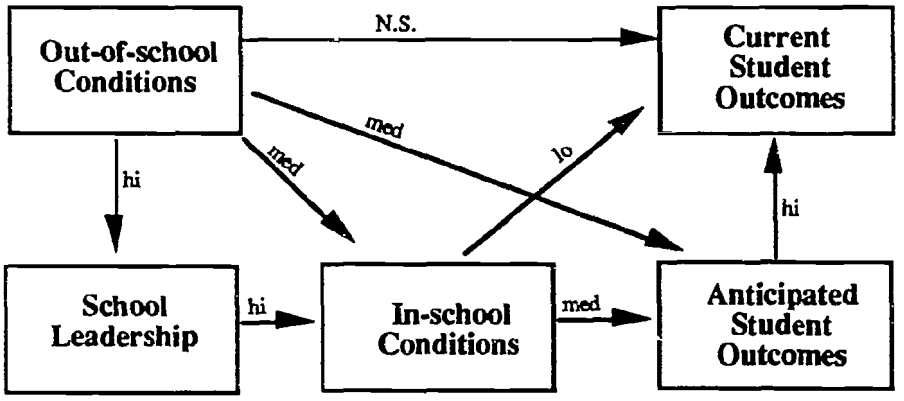

Figure 9.3: Explaining variation in perceived current student outcomes: The contribution of four categories
(N = 350)

Out-of-school conditions have strong, significant effects (path coefficient = .49) on school leadership and moderate, but significant effects on both in-school conditions (.36) and anticipated student outcomes (.39). School leadership has strong significant effects (.54) on in-school conditions; in-school conditions have medium to low, but significant effects on anticipated student outcomes (.28) and current student outcomes (.18). Anticipated student outcomes have a very strong effect (.60) on current student outcomes. This model explains 55% of the variation in teachers' perceptions of current student outcomes.

Table 9.2 reports the total effects on current student outcomes of all variables in the model depicted in Figure 9.3. The strongest total effects among specific sets of conditions are attributable to the community (.38), the Ministry (.27), teachers (commitment and perceived participation in decision making) (.21), and leaders (.17). With the exception of teachers, these are also the sets of conditions which exercised the strongest influence on implementation of most of the seven Transition Years practices.

Table 9.2

Total Effects of Out-of-school Conditions, In-school Conditions, School Leadership and Anticipated Student Outcomes in Teachers' Perceptions of Current Student Outcomes
(N = 350)

Conditions and Leadership	*Perceived Current Student Outcomes*
Out-of-school	.50*
Ministry	.27*
Board	.01
Community	.38*
Leader	.16*
In-school	.34*
Goals	.09
Culture	.12*
Teachers	.21*
Program	.08
Policy	.13*
Resources	.05
Anticipated Outcome	.61*

Finally, Figure 9.4 depicts relationships among in-school conditions and between those conditions and both anticipated and current student outcomes. Teachers and policy and organization have significant relationships with anticipated student outcomes (path coefficients of .44 and .23, respectively). The direct relationship between policy and organization and current student outcomes is weak, but statistically significant.

Relationships among in-school conditions in Figure 9.4 are virtually the same as was reported in Figure 9.2.

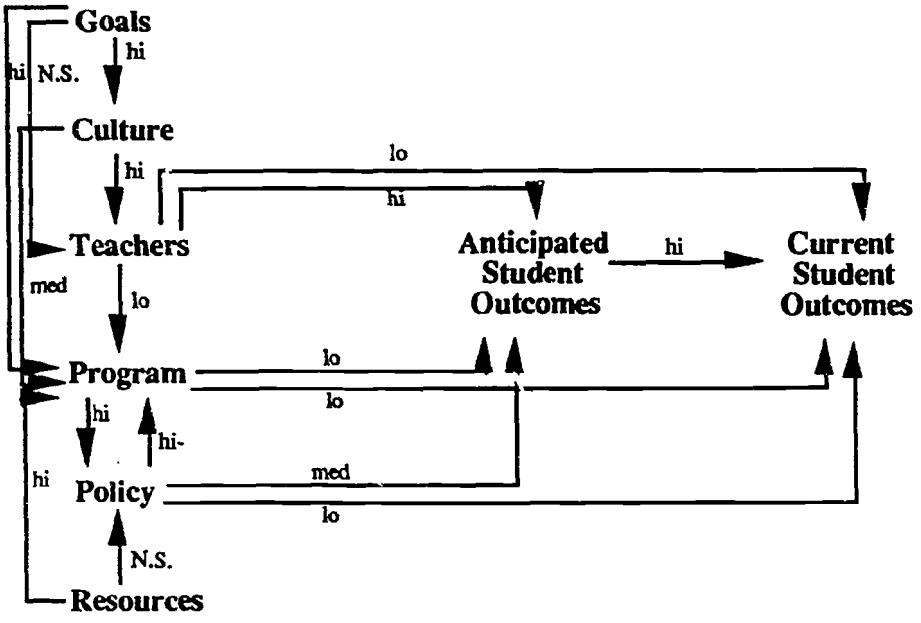

Figure 9.4: Relations among in-school conditions and between in-school conditions and perceived student outcomes (N = 350)

9.4 Explaining Variation in Student Participation and Identification

Chapter 7 included a description of students' opinions concerning their levels of participation in school and their identification with school. Students also responded to questions concerning the quality of instruction they were receiving in school and their own abilities and school performance. Finally, students described the nature of their family's educational culture.

As we argued in Chapters 4 and 7, student participation in and identification with school is a predictor of or proxy for student achievement and retention rates, among other things. This section reports the results of analyses aimed at explaining variation on student participation and identification. To do this, models were tested

which included, as explanatory or independent variables, school leadership and conditions in and outside the school, as was the case with models described in previous sections of this chapter. In addition, implementation of Transition Years practices as well as students' opinions of quality of instruction and family educational culture were added to the models as possible explanatory variables.

Figure 9.5 is a simplified version of two separate path analyses - one conducted using, as the dependent variable, student participation, the other student identification with school (see Appendix for this chapter). Results were essentially the same in both cases. As previous analyses have reported, out-of-school conditions have strong direct effects on school leadership (path coefficients about .49) and significant but weaker effects on in-school conditions (.24). School leadership has a strong direct effect on in-school conditions (.67) and a weaker, but still significant direct effect on the implementation of Transition Years practices (.22), as is also the case with in-school conditions (.35).

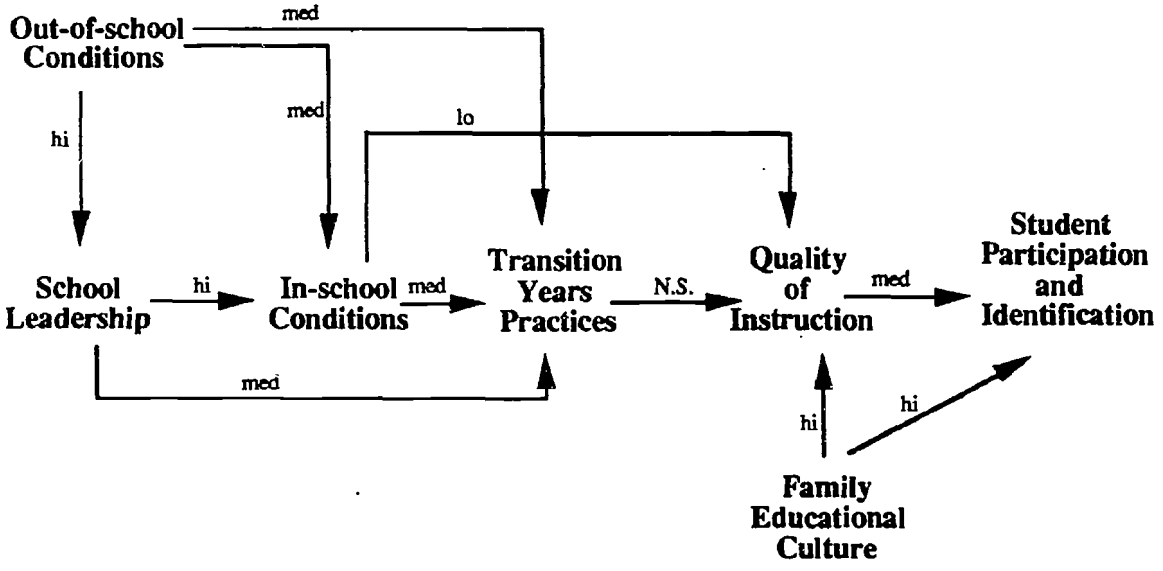

Figure 9.5: Explaining Variation in Student Participation and Identification

(N = 135)

The rest of Figure 9.5 is the truly interesting part. Interesting because things to do with schools (as defined by our model) seem to explain little of the variation in student participation and identification: this includes implementation of Transition Years practices! In fact, little to do with schools seems to account for much of the variation in students' opinions regarding the quality of their instruction! In contrast, between 55% and 64% of the variation in student participation and identification is accounted for by students' views concerning quality of instruction (.35 to .66) and family educational culture (.21 to .48). Furthermore, family educational culture has a strong, direct effect (.59) on students' opinions concerning quality of instruction. This seems to suggest two things. First, if school-related conditions have strong direct effects on student participation and identification, it does not seem likely that they are conditions included in our study. Second, assuming that the school-related conditions included in the study are as powerful a set as can be found, much more attention needs to be given to the school's potential contribution to family educational culture.

9.5 Explaining the Nature, Causes and Consequences of School Leadership

Previous analyses, described in this chapter, did not include a detailed examination of those elements of school leadership that were of greatest consequence for Transition Years initiatives. Those analyses did suggest, however, that school leadership, considered as a composite variable: (a) was strongly influenced by conditions outside of the school; (b) had strong direct effects on conditions in the school as well as on the implementation of Transition Years practices; and (c) had weak direct effects on teachers' perceptions of current student outcomes. With these findings as a point of departure, this section of the chapter responds to three questions:

- Which conditions outside of the school have the greatest influence on school leadership (causes of leadership)?

- Which conditions in the school are most susceptible to school leadership (consequences of leadership)?

- Which aspects of school leadership are the most potent (nature of leadership)?

. Figure 9.6 summarizes the results of our data analyses as they bear on the first two of these questions (causes and consequences). This figure actually synthesizes and simplifies results of two separate analyses, one which considered the effects of leadership with teachers' perceptions of student outcomes as the dependent variable (the indirect effect of leadership) and one which considered degree of implementation of Transition Years practices as the dependent variable. Results of the two analyses were largely the same. But the few differences that were evident suggested stronger leadership effects on the implementation of Transition Years practices than on perceived student outcomes.

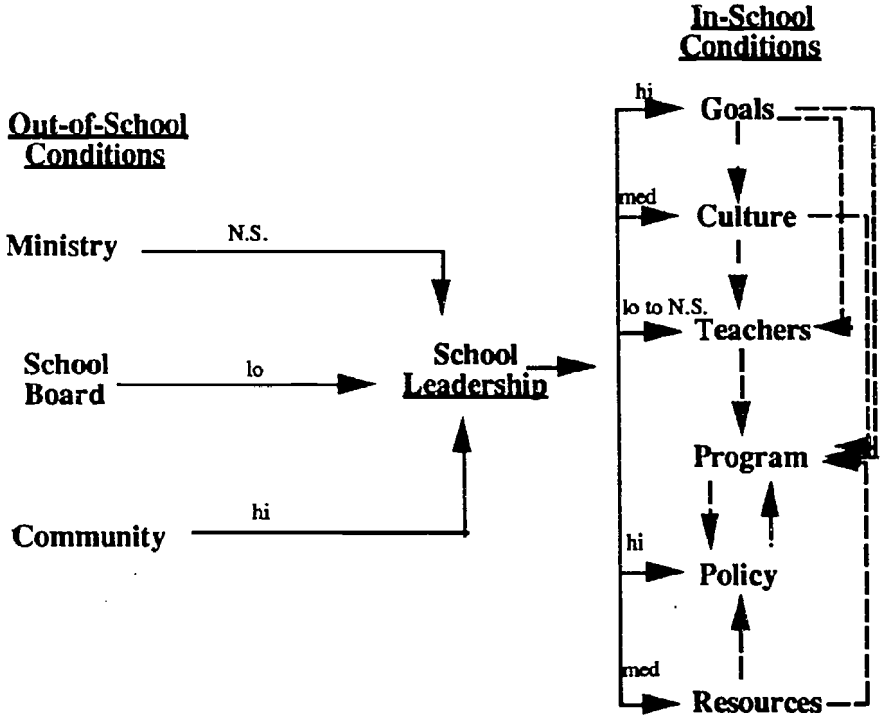

Figure 9.6: The causes and consequences of school leadership
(N = 350)

The influence of out-of-school conditions, alone, explains about 30% of the variance in school leadership. This is quite a lot considering the known effects of such other "internal" factors as leaders' age, experience, gender, personality, and the like. Of the three out-of-school conditions which were measured, the strongest influence comes from the community (path coefficients in the .40 to .50 range). The

school board is a weak but still significant influence; the effect of the Ministry on school leaders was not statistically significant.

The direct effects of school leadership are significant on four of the five in-school conditions which were measured: a strong direct influence on teachers' perceptions about school goals (path coefficients at about .50) and school policies and organization (about .40). School leadership has a moderate, direct influence on teachers' perceptions of culture and the adequacy of school resources (in the .25 to .30 range).

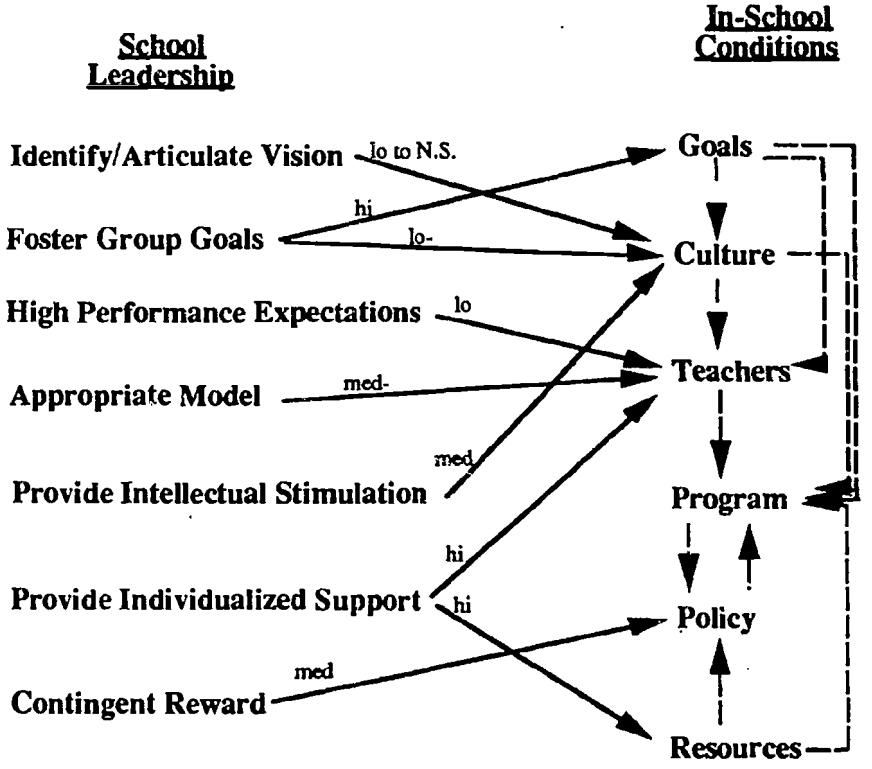

Figure 9.7: The nature of school leadership
(N = 350)

Figure 9.7 displays the direct relationships between six dimensions of transformational and one dimension of transactional leadership and the six in-school conditions which were measured - our answer to the question about the nature of school leadership: this model was suggested by recent prior research

(Leithwood, Dart, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1992). There are no direct effects of leadership upon teachers' perceptions concerning programs and instruction. While Figure 9.5 suggested that this was also the case with teachers (their perceived participation, commitment, etc.), Figure 9.7 offers a more complex explanation. Three dimensions of leadership have significant impact on the teacher category of conditions - one strongly, one weakly, but positively, the other moderately and negatively.

All dimensions of leadership are significantly related to one or more in-school conditions. The weakest of these dimensions are modelling appropriate behavior, conveying high performance expectations and articulating a vision. Fostering acceptance of group goals and providing individualized support are the most potent. The one dimension of transactional leadership, leader contingent reward, is found to be significantly related to policy and organization (.21).

9.6 Summary

A commitment-building strategy for school restructuring, used as a framework for this study, identified a number of conditions inside and outside the school as important in accounting for the success of restructuring efforts: school leadership was included in the strategy, as well. This chapter described the results of a series of path analyses designed to explain variation across pilot sites with respect to three different types of effects or consequences of Transition Years initiatives: the degree of implementation of seven types of Transition Years practices (e.g., student assessment, curriculum integration); teachers' perceptions of impact on student outcomes; and students' participation in and identification with school. Results reported in this chapter are summarized below.

1. Variation across pilot schools in perceived levels of implementation of the seven categories of Transition Years practices and perceived student outcomes were explained as follows:

   - three sets of conditions had consistently significant and strong effects on implementation of almost all categories of Transition Years practices. These were conditions associated with the community (e.g., teachers' perceptions of the extent of support or opposition from parents and wider community), the Ministry (e.g., teachers' perceptions about the adequacy of funding) as well as

the strength of the leadership provided in the school (examined in more detail in Chapter 8). In addition, the status of teachers' perceptions about issues regarding program and instruction had a significant effect on the implementation of three categories of Transition Years practices;

- relationships among conditions within the school were complex. Analyses suggested direct effects on the implementation of Transition Years of teachers (their beliefs about the extent of their participation in decision making, and their commitment to implementing their Transition Years initiatives), priorities concerning programs and instruction and the supportiveness of policies and organization: the perceptions of teachers encompassed within these variables were themselves influenced by beliefs about how clear and compatible were Transition Years goals with their own and their schools' goals, beliefs about how collaborative was their schools' culture, and beliefs about the adequacy of available resources.

2. Results of analyses to explain variation in students' self-reported levels of participation in and identification with school were as follows:

- the models used for data analysis explained a substantial amount of the variation in students' participation in and identification with school (55 to 64%);

- most of this variation was explained by the direct effects of students' perceptions of their family educational culture and students' perceptions of the quality of instruction received at school. Family educational culture also had strong, positive, and direct effects on quality of instruction;

- transition years practices had essentially no effect on students' levels of school participation and engagement or students' perception of the quality of instruction received at school. Students' perceptions of the quality of instruction were significantly but only modestly influenced by conditions in the school.

3. Results concerning school leadership suggested that:

- the most potent aspects of school leadership were fostering commitment to group goals and providing individualized support.

- school goals, culture, policies and resources were the in-school conditions directly influenced most by school leadership.

- school community and school board initiatives (in that order) were significant influences on the nature of school leadership.

10.
Conclusions

10.1 Overview

Chapters 6 through 9 report the detailed results of this study in what we hope is an easily accessible form. Each chapter, in addition, ends with a concise summary of detailed findings. While the implications of these detailed results could be further examined at some length, we leave that to the interested reader for now. This chapter, instead, explores a small number of major issues which have become visible to us by taking several steps back from the detailed results; they are issues, if you like, concerning the general shape and condition of the Transition Years "forest".

Initiatives being undertaken in Transition Years pilot sites are in their very early days. It would be unrealistic, therefore, to anticipate noticeable influences on conventional types of student achievement or on behavioral outcomes such as student attendance, discipline, or school retention rates; indeed, pilot site staffs indicated that this was so, pointing instead to greater cooperation among students in class and ease of transition for students from elementary to secondary schools as the most likely effects of their efforts to date.

Rather than a premature focus on students, we argued that building the commitment of staffs to the Transition Years effort was a crucial task as well as a more appropriate focus for the research at this stage: the sources of such commitment are to be found in many parts of the school system and have their effects as people in the system interact with one another in an effort to make sense of the contexts in which they work. And evidence from the study paints a fairly optimistic picture of pilot site staffs' commitment to their Transition Years work, as well as, more generally, high levels of job satisfaction. So, if commitment is going to be crucial to the eventual success of Transition Years efforts, the schools as a whole seem to be off to a good start.

But a note of caution clearly is called for. Commitment and enthusiasm are much more readily generated in the initial stages of almost any change effort than they are maintained when the inevitable problems, disappointments and weariness that come with time begin to set in. In this concluding chapter, results of this study are used as the basis for drawing attention to four significant issues on which, we believe, hinge the likelihood for sustained commitment to Transition Years implementation. These are issues about (a) the purposes for Transition Years efforts; (b) the substance of changes to be made; (c) leadership for the Transition Years; and (d) the role of the family. Each is addressed in the subsequent sections of this chapter along with eleven related conclusions.

10.2 Purposes for Transition Years Efforts: The Possibility of Goal Displacement

> The changes to our educational system are designed *to raise expectations for all students* through a common core curriculum. The *excellence of our system will be increased* with the destreaming of Grade 9 and *more equitable educational opportunities for our students.* By allowing all students to concentrate longer on core subjects before making important and long-lasting educational decisions, we hope to *see levels of achievement rise.* (Silipo, 1992, p. 1 - italics added)

We open this brief discussion by admitting frankly to considerable uncertainty about how well what we have to say here fits individual schools; certainly there will be schools not well represented by our remarks - perhaps many. Nevertheless, inferences drawn from different sets of evidence collected in the study, as well as from the context in which schools are working, create the distinct possibility of considerable "goal displacement". What we mean by this is quite simple. Presumably all this effort to change, to "restructure" Ontario schools, is intended to pay off in a significant way for students. But there are many forms such payoff could take: higher levels of academic achievement; better vocational preparation; enhanced self-esteem; more refined interpersonal skills; a longer school career, and the like. And these are payoffs which concern only individuals. Other payoffs might involve greater equity for particular groups of students - special needs students, visible minorities, socio-economically disadvantaged and young women, for example. The quotation from the former Minister of Education at the beginning

of this section draws attention to some very general outcomes aspired to at the provincial level.

Evidence from the study suggests that many staffs, while focusing clearly on the implementation of some sub-sets of practices advocated by the provincial Transition Years initiative, may not have nearly so clearly in mind the desired effects of such practices for students. Teachers perceived as relatively unlikely, for example, that their efforts would: reduce discipline problems and incidences of suspension; increase clarity on the part of students about future educational aspirations and life goals; reduce dropouts; or provide for the academic success of a larger proportion of students than has been the case previously. Arguably, however, concern about these goals was among the major stimulants initially giving rise to the Transition Years initiatives. In contrast, teachers believed their efforts were most likely to result in more positive attitudes of students toward school, growth in self-concept and greater cooperation among students during their school work. While these goals are laudable and perhaps represent early steps toward other goals, most certainly they were not among the fundamental concerns resulting in the political will and additional resources driving the Transition Years policy initiative. Nor, we suspect, are they among the central concerns of most school staffs.

So why spend all this effort and money to accomplish goals not considered of prime importance by policy makers, school staffs not to mention the general public? One plausible answer is that too much emphasis has been devoted to the "approved set" of new practices to be implemented (especially forms of student assessment and destreaming) with far less attention paid to the outcomes for students which implementation of those practices is intended to achieve. Such goal displacement might not be such a worry if one could be sure that the new practices being implemented would have the hoped-for impact on students. But no such certainty exists, even under circumstances of so-called "full implementation". This leads to the conclusion that:

1. *Much more attention usefully could be devoted to clarifying the major purposes to be accomplished for students as a consequence of the Transition Years initiative.*

This conclusion parallels one also made recently by Hargreaves et al (1992, p. xiii) in their study of destreaming in Ontario secondary schools.

Clarifying major purposes for the Transition Years will not, by itself, be helpful unless several other conditions also prevail, however. Several of these conditions were described in Chapter 2 in the discussion about the motivational value of personal goals. Based in part on these conditions, it is also concluded that:

2. *In clarifying major purposes, it will be valuable to focus on the **unique** contributions to be made by the Transition Years efforts - avoiding a general restatement of the goals of education for the school, school system or province.*

The success of the Transition Years initiatives across the province, as a whole, depends on establishing a small number of unambiguous and compelling goals. Such goals will engender the commitment of school staffs to the extent that their meaning is clear and progress toward meeting them can be described. They will help teachers with multiple responsibilities (e.g., intermediate, senior) to recognize the distinct intentions for Transition Years classes. Accordingly, it is also concluded that:

3. *For each major purpose to be accomplished for students by the Transition Years initiative, the development and application of indicators would be helpful.*

Such indicators would illustrate what it means to accomplish each purpose and where desired serve as the starting point for assessing the degree to which progress is being made in accomplishing each purpose. Conclusions 1, 2 and 3 might be acted upon by individual schools, Transition Years pilot sites, school systems or provincially. And some effort at all these levels is probably warranted. But these conclusions are worth attention at the provincial level if the legitimate public and political interests initially giving rise to the Transition Years are to have a chance of being realized.

10.3 Transition Years Practices: The Dangers of Superstitious Learning

> There is a fundamental mismatch between the nature of reality in complex systems and our predominant ways of thinking about that

> reality. The first step in correcting this mismatch is to let go of the notion that cause and effect are close in time and space. (Senge, 1990, p. 63)

Those attempting to restructure schools face a fundamental dilemma. On the one hand, results of years of research on school improvement indicate quite clearly that it is an incremental process and one that seems most successful when the number of changes to be made at one time is relatively small. On the other hand, a more recent line of evidence has begun to suggest that piecemeal changes sometimes create organizational inconsistencies and these inconsistencies are the seeds of failed school reform. According to this perspective, schools should be viewed as coherent, if organic, systems: those wishing to change one part of the system should also take into account what implications that change holds for other parts.

Of course, this presents no insurmountable problem when imagining a *restructured* school - the end product of a comprehensive change initiative. But what of a school in the process of *restructuring*? Can changes be made slowly enough for people to come to grips with them and yet fast enough to avoid the frustrations and obstacles presented by the as-yet-unchanged aspects of the school? It is apparent in data from secondary schools in this study, for example, that failure to address changes in timetables (which would assist collaborative planning of staff) and physical facilities is standing in the way of other types of changes considered central to the Transition Years. Yet these schools reported an ambitious amount of change underway; on average, they were attempting to implement new practices from four of the seven categories of practices advocated by the Transition Years.

This dilemma has another aspect to it, as well, a phenomenon which organizational learning theorists refer to as "superstitious learning" (Levitt & March, 1988). Let's assume that a legitimate part of the school restructuring process is professional learning on the part of individuals and groups. Within such an assumption, mistakes and failures are inevitable in spite of best efforts. But these can be justified as long as people learn from such experiences, and, as a consequence, gradually develop "smarter" school organizations. The problem, however, is that it is hard to learn from experience in an organization. As the quotation opening this section suggests, "causes" are separated from "effects" by huge amounts of time

during which many other events also take place that might also be "causes". Imagine that two years ago, alarmed by an apparent 35% dropout rate, Progressive Secondary School implemented an intervention program for at-risk grade 10 and 11 students. By the end of this year, the dropout rate, impressively, was down to 23%. Why? Those involved in the at-risk intervention program would be more than a little inclined to point to their program. But what about the recession and attendant job scarcity, recent changes in the ethnic makeup of the student population, concerted efforts, in parallel, to introduce cooperative learning strategies throughout the school ...? Concluding incorrectly that the cause of increased student retention was solely or predominantly the grade 10 and 11 intervention program would be an example of "superstitious learning".

If the problem is finding a balance between too much and too little change, all the while avoiding superstitious learning, what might be tried as a solution? Two strategies, we believe:

4. *The bundle of changes incorporated into the Transition Years initiatives of a school should be made up of a very small number of highly promising first-order changes and whatever second-order changes appear called for to ensure consistent support for those first-order changes.*

Given a high priority goal for students (e.g., increased participation in extra-curricular activities by students not usually involved) a first-order change would be some aspect of the school likely to impact quite directly on that goal (e.g., increased variety of non-competitive extra-curricular activities available). Second-order changes, in this example, might include redesigning teachers' responsibilities, rescheduling after-school bus schedules, developing collaborative programs with the local municipality, and providing pay for students to administer and facilitate extra-curricular programs.

Conclusion 4 (above) is consistent with the argument of organizational learning theorists (e.g., Levitt & March, 1988) that a "large but few changes" strategy (a significant change but clearly and narrowly focused) offers a much better opportunity to learn from experience than does a "small but many changes" strategy: the chances of creating and detecting real effects is better with less chance of superstitious learning. However:

5. *Transition Years initiatives need to include ongoing monitoring, as much as possible by those without a direct stake in the implementation effort.*

Even for those Transition Years practices about which there is the most compelling general evidence of impact, effects in particular schools are uncertain. As some analysts have suggested, the success of significant change efforts depends, as much as anything, on continuous and skilled problem coping (e.g., Louis & Miles, 1990). But to do this, one needs to have decent information about the problems that actually exist and the consequences of one's initiatives to cope with them. Furthermore, it will be important in collecting and interpreting this information to remain sensitive to the understandable biases of those involved in the changes, their need for their efforts to succeed and their necessarily limited perspectives on their own work. Collaborating with staffs in other schools to monitor one another's efforts might be one way of keeping the school open to fresh points of view.

A related obstacle concerns access by school staffs to technical knowledge, expertise, and resources for monitoring activities. Collaboration, in monitoring with members of the research community, or individuals with such expertise (e.g., graduate students) is one way to circumvent this block while at the same time introducing a means for keeping biases in check. Our own research (Cousins & Earl, 1992; Cousins & Leithwood, in press) is beginning to show that such activities contribute in significant ways to the development of "dense interpersonal networks", a characteristic of learning organizations.

10.4 School Leadership: The Need for a New Model

> Transformational, moral leadership is not a tool, but rather a process which makes of the leader a tool, i.e., an instrument to individual and group development and the satisfaction of authentic human needs. (Carey, 1992, p. 232)

School leadership had a strong, direct influence on conditions in the school effecting progress with Transition Years and a weaker but still significant direct influence on the implementation of the Transition Years practices. Formal school leaders were cited as most frequently the source of such leadership, although

leadership was distributed among other individuals and groups in the school (especially in secondary schools), as well. School leadership undeniably is a powerful explanation for variation among schools in their Transition Years initiatives. This is leadership defined in transformational terms. Because transformational leadership appears to be so helpful, we conclude that:

6. *School systems and other provincial agencies responsible for leadership development consider adopting transformational leadership as an explicit model of those types of leadership practices most likely to foster the school restructuring called for by the Transition Years.*

While the meaning of transformational leadership has yet to be defined in a precise fashion, it evokes an image of leadership highly compatible with those aspects of the school restructuring agenda that call for building the commitment of a professionalized teaching staff, collaborative forms of school decision making, support for both individual and organizational learning and the (often collaborative) creation of a compelling vision to which school staffs aspire (Sergiovanni, 1990; Leithwood, 1992). As an ideal model to strive toward, transformational leadership ought to supplant instructional leadership. The instructional leadership model has usefully directed leaders' attention to the technical core of schooling (although it never proved to be as compelling a model of secondary as distinct from elementary school leadership). But, in doing so, it is not sufficiently respectful of teachers' knowledge, often stressing the use of control strategies and extrinsic incentives to alter teacher behaviors in the direction of a so-called "research-based", single best way of teaching.

Transformational leadership also encourages leaders to attend to schooling's technical core. But such leadership recognizes that most of the effects of leadership on student outcomes are mediated by the psychological states of individual staff members and the collective culture of the school. It also assumes that teaching is a complex and uncertain act requiring considerable judgement, in concert with a broad and flexible repertoire of knowledge and skill.

The transformational model of leadership directs attention to two critical *leadership goals*. These goals and how to accomplish them have been addressed by

results of this study; they are the basis of the next two conclusions about school leadership.

7. *One basic leadership goal worth adopting is the development of high degrees of teacher commitment to and engagement in the restructuring challenges issued by the Transition Years.*

Because such commitment makes an important contribution to job satisfaction it can be argued that helping to foster it is a defensible goal in its own right. However, in justifying this as a major theme of the study, it has been argued that Transition Years initiatives are, necessarily, not fully specified; that the practices needed to accomplish whatever goals are associated with the Transition Years, as discussed in Recommendation 1, in significant degree, have to be created by those in schools and school systems. This takes high levels of commitment, and engagement. Commitment and engagement are also powerful predictors of at least some types of student achievement (Kushman, 1992; Louis & Smith, 1991; Rosenholtz, 1989). Chapters 8 and 9 of this study identified leadership initiatives which help develop high degrees of commitment and engagement.

8. *A second basic leadership goal worth adopting is fostering the professional growth of individual staff members and the learning of the school organization, as a whole.*

If, as we have argued, commitment to a compelling vision for one's organization motivates people to change, learning makes it possible. Both commitment and learning manifest themselves not only within individuals but across collectivities of individuals and school organizations, as well. School leaders should not only help to foster the professional growth of individual staff members, they should also help collaborating teams of staff members become more expert in their collective problem solving.

10.5 Family Educational Culture: Restructuring With a Bang Not a Whimper

> ... school as we conceive it implies family as we conceive it. Yet family as we conceive of it no longer corresponds to family as it now exists ... This implies that schools, to be effective, must change as families

change, must be adjusted to the conditions of the institution they complement. (Coleman, 1987, pp. 32, 35-36)

Results explaining variation among schools in students' participation and identification were the most striking and significant of the study. Family educational culture was shown to have strong direct and indirect effects on students' perceptions of the quality of instruction received at school, the level of their participation in school and their sense of identification with school. Family educational culture and perceived quality of instruction together accounted for between 55% and 64% of the variation in student participation and identification. No other variable in the study was significantly related to student participation and identification! What could these results mean?

First, these results could mean that the quality of instruction provided by teachers depends on teachers' perceptions of their students' family status and its possible consequences for parents' expectations of schools: there is some evidence in support of this explanation (Metz, 1990). Second, the results could mean that students' predispositions toward the value of schooling, shaped significantly by their family educational cultures, have a strong influence on the evaluation of their instructional experiences; more supportive family educational cultures attach greater significance to the school experience, stimulating students to find greater meaning in that experience: Coleman, Collinge and Seifert (1992) offer substantially this explanation for their recently collected evidence.

The results also give rise to some speculation that schools may be experiencing a "law of diminishing returns" from their efforts to further refine the core technology of schooling, as the Transition Years urges (much of this refinement has taken place and must continue to take place, of course). The general form of this argument has been outlined by Farrell (1989), for example, in the context of education in developed as compared with developing countries. For example, when inservice is provided to teachers who have had little formal teacher training and almost no on-the-job professional development, the effects in improved instruction can be substantial. But as the level of teachers' professional education increases, one can expect smaller and smaller effects on their instruction from each additional increment of inservice provided. How much more educational improvement "juice", then, can be squeezed out of yet more curriculum development efforts,

student grouping alternatives or refinements to student assessment and reporting techniques? And should this really count as educational restructuring anyway, even though the Transition Years is intended to move the school system in a promising new direction? While it remains important to work on the refinement of those school practices identified by the Transition Years, we also recommend that:

9. *Where family circumstances warrant it and where parents/guardians welcome it, schools would benefit from devoting a much larger proportion of their efforts to assisting families in providing the most productive family educational cultures possible.*

There are many reasons why some schools will not welcome this conclusion. It may be viewed as: intrusive on families; beyond the already over-stretched capacities of schools; demanding know-how teachers feel they do not have; taking away scarce resources from education in the school and the like. But as James Coleman (1987) has argued, many families and the wider communities of which they are a part can no longer be counted on to equip children with the "social capital" (attitudes, effort, and self-concept) required for them to benefit from the opportunities, demands and rewards provided by school experience, in part due to the "downward migration of the point at which parental authority is relaxed" (1987, p. 35). Schools are among the few other institutions likely to be in a position to respond. In Coleman's terms, social capital in the raising of children "... is the norms, the social networks and the relationships between adults and children that are of value for the child's growing up" (1987, p. 37). Social capital is reflected, for example, by the presence of adults in the home and the range of exchange between parents or other members of the community and children about academic, social, economic and personal matters.

Lack of "social capital" is a comfortingly antiseptic description of a host of truly messy, intransigent and shocking social problems faced by school staffs in their work with students these days. The media reports symptoms of these problems almost daily: instances of gross and hostile student disregard not only for schools but the rights and dignity of adults, and other students. Children are "swarmed"; drugs and alcohol and even guns are a routine part of some student subcultures; part-time jobs take precedence over school in many students' lives; many children spend less time in school than they do vicariously experiencing the problematic values often portrayed on T.V. and through rock videos; overworked and overstressed parents

have precious little time to spend with their children. This is not a comprehensive list.

Schools, as institutions apart from families and their surrounding communities, stand no chance whatsoever of making a dent in the problems these symptoms point to; while each has multiple causes, their prominence is partly a consequence of reduced levels of attention by parents. And without making a dent in these problems there can be no reasonable expectation that the lofty aspirations implied by the Transition Years effort will be approximated. Over the past two decades, in particular, schools have been the object of an incredible amount of criticism for failing to meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's youth. The target has been a safe one for politicians in need of a platform and for other reformers. Schools do not bite back. Rarely are schools in a position to respond vigorously; although a quasi-monopoly, they are dependent on public support for their continuing existence. Nor do they have the (slack) resources required to adequately document their contributions in a way that would satisfy their critics.

Over the same two decades of school criticism, of course, the so-called "traditional" nuclear and extended family unit has continued its rapid decline. Whatever one might think about the other effects of the two parent, single income family and its attendant trappings, it was well designed for raising children. And schools were designed in symbiotic relationship with that traditional family unit. But families have gradually backed away from their part of this deal. Many schools have tried to fill the vacuum, but their basic characteristics, mission, and resources place a ceiling on what is possible for them to do.

The issues raised in this section concerning the contribution of families and communities to the social capital which schools have traditionally assumed children to possess are complex and in several respects quite controversial. Indeed, members of the research team debated these issues at some length without arriving at a position with which all could agree. It may be useful, therefore, to clarify further what we are <u>not</u> claiming, as well as what we are claiming.

We <u>are not</u> claiming, for example: that the traditional nuclear family was or is always supportive of childrens' development; that families alone have the responsibility for providing children with social capital; that family forms should

not change; that non-traditional family forms cannot provide children with considerable social capital; that parents or guardians in non-traditional family forms should feel guilty about their responsibilities as parents; that other issues such as class, wealth and gender do not play a part in the family's form and its contribution to childrens' social capital.

We <u>are</u> claiming, on the other hand: that social capital remains a crucial prerequisite for many valued types of formal learning; that, just as learning seems to occur best through one-on-one tutoring, social capital is likely produced best through a sustained, personal, supportive and educative relationship between the child and one or more adults; that schools face serious obstacles when they attempt to expand their functions to the provision of social capital and that some of these obstacles are at least partly outside their control (e.g., funding, public images of what a school ought to be, pressure groups with neoconservative agendas largely insensitive to and unsympathetic with the need for schools to provide social capital). Nevertheless, there seems little alternative to schools continuing to address these obstacles. This leads us to conclude that:

10. *Consideration needs to be given to the redesigning of many schools toward a design explicitly intended to provide children with the social capital previously (if incorrectly) assumed to be provided by parents, as well as the training and education more traditionally assigned to schools.*

A number of the elements in this new design are evident in some schools in the province which have taken the provision of social capital to students as a central part of their missions (the work of the staff and administration of Sutton District High School provides a particularly impressive example of what can be done). The elements include, for example, making available to students and their parents social services in the school building, providing day care facilities for the children of their teenage and adult students, and encouraging parents who dropped out of school to return and complete their secondary school education. Morgan and Morgan (1992) provide a number of additional examples likely to be quite helpful.

In order to forge even stronger bonds between communities, families and schools and to reflect the nature of school-community relationships evident in data from the study, a final conclusion that seems warranted is that:

11. *Parents and other members of the community ought to be actively encouraged to assume school-level decision-making and governance roles much more frequently than seems to be the case at present.*

We believe that working directly with families and schools to provide students with more social capital is a "high leverage" strategy for school restructuring. Like many other high leverage strategies, the change it produces may not come fast. But as Senge (1990) so convincingly argues, in reference to both natural and social systems, the fastest rate of change is rarely the optimal rate. Furthermore, small changes in students' social capital seem likely to have large effects on their educability.

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